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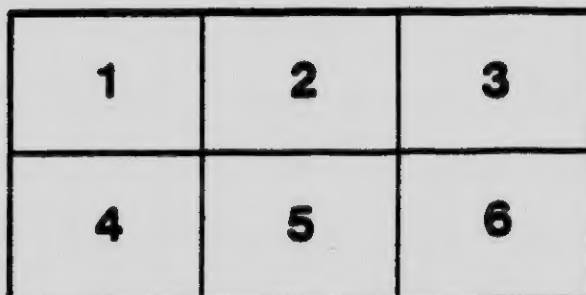
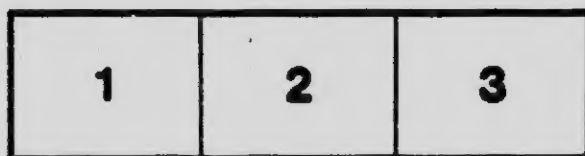
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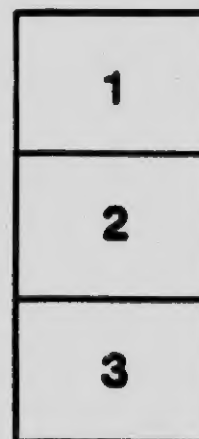
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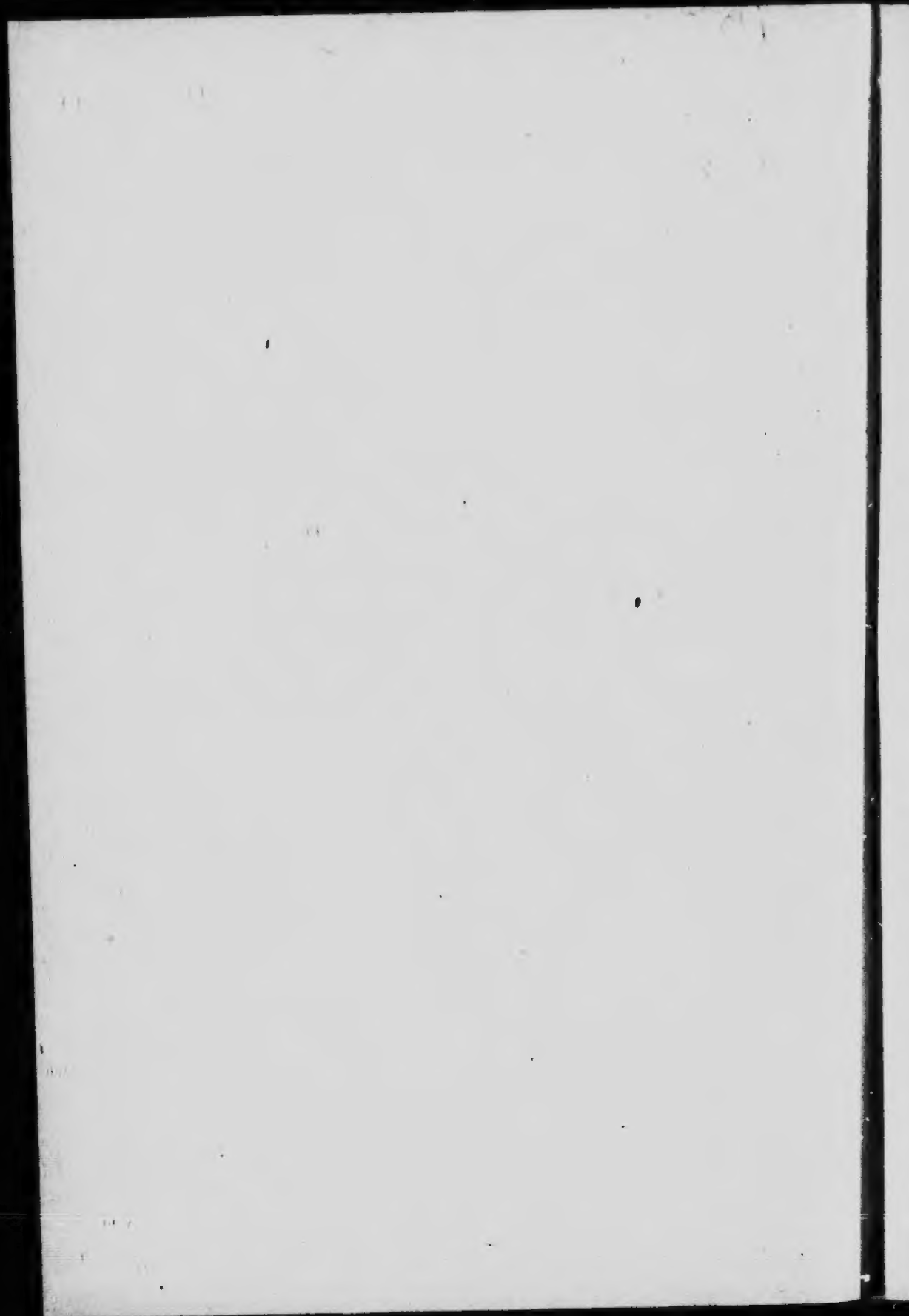
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To my dear Bill
King — from his
Sincere friend

Sam J. Fisher

Waterloo, Ont.
Nov. 13. 08



WINONA

AND OTHER STORIES

BY
WILLIAM J. FISCHER
Author of "Songs by the Wayside"

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
J. E. COPUS, S. J.



ST. LOUIS, MO. and FREIBURG (Baden)
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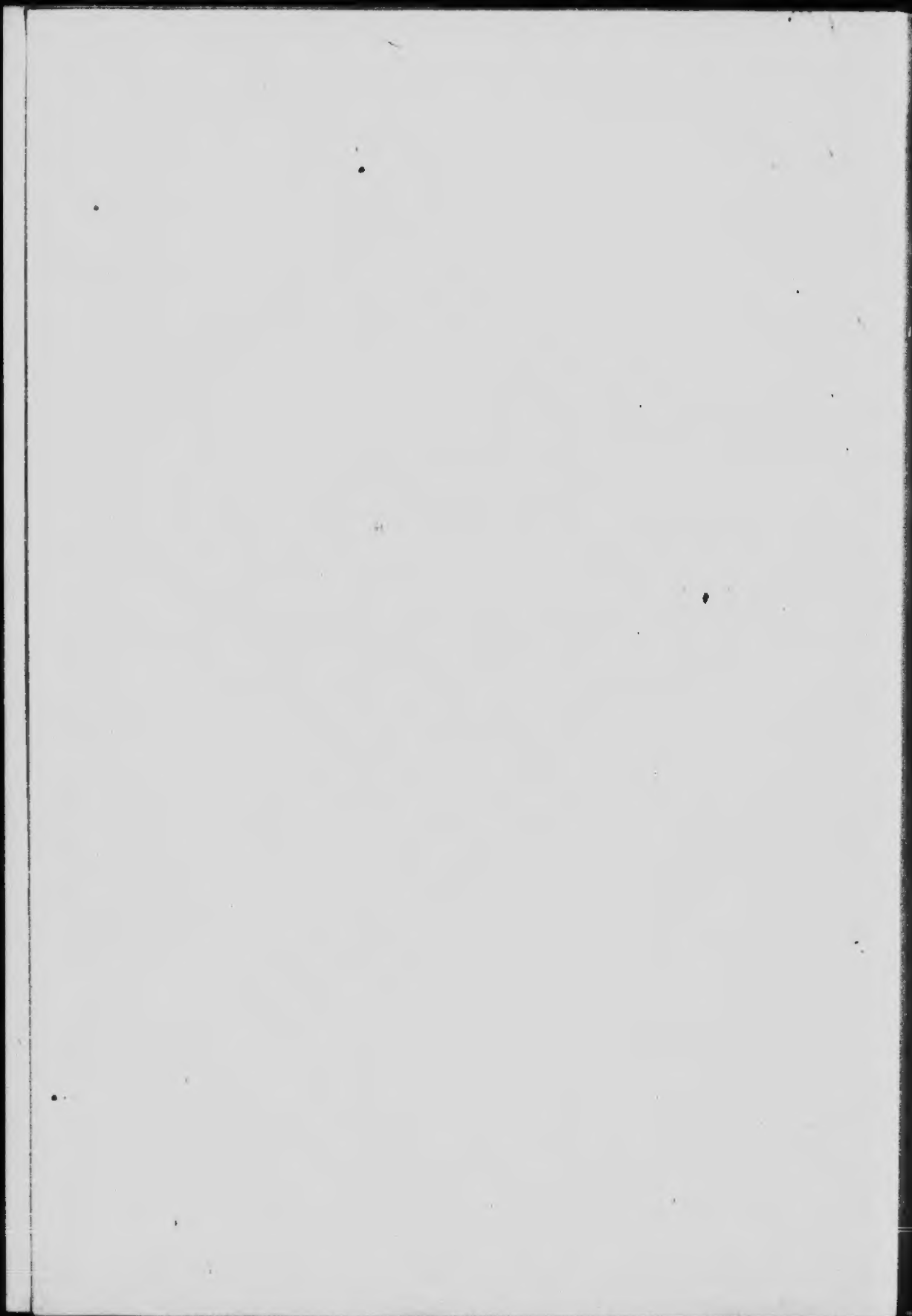
To my dear mother and father, whose strong, abiding love I count the sweetest thing on earth, I gratefully dedicate this little book of tales in the hope that it may bring back precious memories of that Childhood—Kingdom, whose doors have closed upon me forever.

THE AUTHOR.

*Waterloo, Canada,
Easter 1906.*

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SAID BEFOREHAND.

The author of these eight delightful tales is not unknown to readers of Catholic magazines and newspapers in Canada and the United States. William J. Fischer, physician, poet, discriminating biographical sketcher, and clever prose story writer, here presents his first book of short stories to the public. The little work is destined to be as popular with old and young as his book of poems: "Songs by the Wayside."

While a profound lover of nature, and living close to it, as shown in these pages, Dr. Fischer takes life seriously—as all physicians, whether of soul or body, must necessarily do—and yet one cannot fail to discover between the lines of these pretty stories a glowingly warm heart which loves humanity. I have read these stories more than once, and there is much that is worth remembering in them.

In reading "Winona, and Other Stories" the critical reader will, I think, be satisfied with the literary style, which has an individuality about it not unpleasing.

As might be expected from the pen of a physician-author, several of the stories deal

with pain and sickness, but, after all, there is no finer field than the sick bed, and its surroundings for the display of those qualities which most ennoble our nature.

Books of short stories were never as popular as at the present time, and unless one is greatly mistaken, this little volume, written during moments of spare leisure in a very busy life, will find many friends, and its author will increase the number of those he already possesses.

J. E. COPUS, S. J.

Easter 1906,
Creighton University,
Omaha, Nebraska.

WINONA.

CHAPTER I.

Sheltered by a number of large pine trees, in the very heart of Notre Dame de Larette—the thickly populated home of the Hurons—stood the lodge of the humble Jesuit missionary. On all sides, as far as eye could reach, were rows and rows of wigwams, the homes of these thrifty children of the wilderness and, through the light and dark green tints of the maple, spruce and pine, one caught glimpses of crimson on the blue sky, that told too soon that another day was nearing its end.

Good Pere Menard, the gentle Blackrobe, who had labored for twenty years among the Huron tribe, had reasons to congratulate himself, for had he not founded this very village and had he not also carried the faith to these deserving creatures? It was a desperate struggle at first. Tso-hahissen, the brawny, old, copper-faced chief, would not listen to the gentle tales of a Redeemer who had suffered the agonies of Calvary's redemption, but Father Menard was determined and, in his mind, treasured visions of a distant,

glorious day that was to bring him the laurel wreath of victory.

That day did come, and, when Tsohahissen bowed his head and was baptized, it was not long before the whole tribe came with him. The great mountain had crumbled to atoms, the big chief was a follower of Christ and now the way was clear and, far beyond, basking in the sunshine of God's smile, lay the wide, open fields that the Blackrobe was to explore. The soil was good, the reaper was experienced and in time there was to be a golden harvest of souls.

Every day, in the twilight hours—those delicious moments so silent and sacred—one could see, there in the open air, a picture that the skilled, artistic fingers of mortal man could never do justice to. There sitting on the grass, silently listening, were the upturned faces of hundreds of red children, their hearts swaying under the clear, ringing words of the cassocked priest, as in soft, musical voice, with crucifix in hand, he pictured the drama of the Crucifixion. And as he stood there, in his pulpit, upon the bared stump of an old oak tree that had fallen a prey to Canadian winds and storms, tears would steal out of his eyes, while a few stray sunbeams from the west brightened his beautiful face—a face that had the freshness of spring in it though it

was crowned by the white of a premature winter.

"I am so glad," he would often say, "that God pointed my way out so clearly. Even when I was but a child, mastering the Latin elements, I dreamed dreams which have since come true. Later, I saw the hand of God directing my footsteps to this western hemisphere—this land where one sees nature, in all her glory, unshorn of her many beauties, unmolested, glorious, real, a veritable garden of Eden, wherein millions of birds pour forth daily their souls in music, doing glory to their Creator." Often his thoughts unlocked the heart of nature and he stole into that holy of holies to hold sweet converse with her. He loved the glorious forest, the sun and moon and stars, the rivers and lakes that shone in the starlight, the flowers that turned their faces to the sun and the birds that madrigaled unceasingly. His was a Wordsworthian love almost. To him the earth itself was a grand poem. He studied it carefully and it brought him nearer to that other land above, where golden fields lay basking in eternal sunshines. Often he would sa.

"When I shall go to sleep and wake again
At dawning in another world than this—
What will atone to me for all I miss?
The light, melodious footsteps of the rain,
The press of leaves against the window pane,

The sunset wistfulness and morning bliss,
The moon's enchantment and the twilight kiss
Of winds, that wander with me through the lane.
Will not my soul remember evermore
The earthly winter's hunger for the spring,
The wet, sweet cheek of April, and the rush
Of roses through the summer's open door,
The feelings that the scented woodlands bring
At evening, with the singing of the thrush."

Father Menard was a descendant of a noble family closely connected with French royalty. Paris, by the Seine, had often sung the praises of his ancestors. The death of his parents left himself and an only brother, Gabrielle, orphans at a period in life when children realize too fully what it means to be without father or mother. But the two found a good friend and mother in the Countess Boulanger. "Be good to these two boys, for my sake, Fanchon, and God will reward you!" were the dying mother's last words, as she pressed the noble, French lady's hand. The two women had been friends through life and Fanchon Boulanger, Countess and possessor of millions in this world's goods, took the orphans into her heart and from that day on was a mother to them in every sense.

The day Father Menard left Paris, Gabrielle was exactly eighteen years old and was pursuing the study of the sciences and the languages at

the University. The former, having graduated in medicine a number of years before, and finding the practice of his profession distasteful, entered the Jesuit novitiate and was ordained when he was about thirty, leaving the next day with a band of missionaries to do God's work in the western hemisphere. And now twenty years had passed since that day, and how he longed to clasp his brother to his heart!

"Not yet! not yet!" he murmured, one evening, as he rose from a bench and closed the rude, wooden door of his lodge and made for the open space, where the Indians were wont to gather at sundown. "Not yet—not yet! When my work is done and the shadows are creeping about me, 'tis then I will return to thee, my beloved France—to rest and to die in peace in thy outstretched arms."

The air was sultry and heavy with the perfume honeysuckle, as the good priest walked along the well-beaten pathway. The ground was parched and dry. It had not rained for weeks and the fields of corn were burning up in the heat. Not a breeze stirred the leaves overhead. The grass was turning red, the trees and flowers were wilting—the very tongue of Nature was parched and hot and longed for the cooling showers, that God alone could give. As the earnest Blackrobe drew nearer he at once noticed that the Indians,

gathered in groups, where discussing some vital issue. Their voices smote the air with their hissing sounds. The whole village was in an uproar. Loud, shrill cries rang out everywhere; men, agitated, threw their arms into the air; women, distracted with excitement, sang minor strains, clear-cut and vigorous, and the monotony of many drums, clappers and rattles filled in the strange medley, that was intensely weird and gruesome.

Father Menard halted a few minutes, his gaze intently fixed on the swaying multitude in front of him. Suddenly his eyes fell upon Tsohahissen. The old chief was carrying a large pole, richly painted, on his swarthy shoulders and his band were following in the rear with dance and song. The missionary knew what was coming and in his heart felt something that was akin to pain. He sighed deeply and whispered thoughtfully: "My poor children! God pity them! They are preparing for their rain-dance and there will be great excitement in the village shortly. Poor Tsohahissen! he is not himself at all this evening." Then, with a quick turn, he was off, and in his heart he wondered if he could prevent them from carrying out this foolish dance. Since his coming among them they had abandoned many former customs, and the last time Tsohahissen stood ready for the dance,

about two years ago, Father Menard's words worked almost magically; the Indians at once had left their respective places and rallied around him and the dance did not go on.

Tsohahissen saw the Blackrobe coming down the pathway and ran out to meet him. When they met, the old chief was breathless and cowered at the priest's feet and kissed the hem of his cassock. Then he rose and, laying his strong hand on the priest's arm, motioned to the scene in front of him and exclaimed in a voice, hoarse from yelling: "Ah! my father! See, thy children wait thy coming with joy. The rivers, the fields, the trees—everything around cries for rain. The flowers in the forest are sad and hang their heads and, when the grass turns red in the sun, everything dies. So big chief will start rain-dance to-night, before the moon comes out, and braves will follow his example and the Blackrobe will give his blessing."

The Indian chief seemed nervous, as he ran his brown, wrinkled fingers through a chain of buffalo teeth that hung around his neck, and, when his old dark face was full upon the sweet-faced priest, his eyes fairly shone like two balls of fire.

Father Menard was silent for a moment. Then he put his hand on the old man's stooped shoulders and said lovingly: "Much better would it be, my son, if you and your children were to get

down on your knees with me this evening and ask God, your Father in heaven, to give you rain."

Tsohahissen raised himself proudly; the eagle-feathers on his head shook slightly and there was a dissatisfied look in his wild eyes. The priest noticed it and he knew the virulence of Tsohahissen's anger, for, good as the latter was, it almost tore his heart in two to see the old traditions and customs of his Huron forefathers thrown aside so carelessly. Father Menard knew all this and as he looked up at the man before him—a towering oak among the beeches and saplings—he noticed that the old chief's eyes were full of tears.

"Hear you not the big river yonder calling for water, O my father?" the old man exclaimed with emotion. "He is calling me. The leaves of the trees are also speaking and the lonely cry of the woodchuck haunts me in my sleep. I fear they are dying and I must hurry. The birds of the air are leaving us and the moose and deer are lean and hollow-eyed. And O, my Indians, my family—they are starving now—the river is drying up and I see nothing but dead men's bones. Come, my father! Come with me! I will take the Blackrobe to his poor children."

And, arm in arm, the priest and chief walked off together and, as Tsohahissen led him forward, cheer followed cheer, and cries, shrieks, war-

whoops came in swift succession, until the whole forest trembled and shook as with fear.

The great ceremony at last began. The pole, about eight feet high, with hawk and eagle-feathers on top, was in its place and Tsohahissen stood admiring the red ring he had painted on it. He, himself, had also made the paint from a red stone, which he found in the shallow river. The women never took part in the dance—the chief always said that their faces would scare the rain away—but they were always present and brought cakes and hominy for the men to eat. The men had now formed large circles around the pole and Tsohahissen, the fire that had been already prepared and, when it was blazing away briskly, threw on tobacco leaves until heavy clouds of smoke filled the air. Then he raised his proud head and, as the smoke rose skyward, extended his bared arms pleadingly to the heavens and cried in a high, strange, hysterical voice: "Rawen Niyoh! I want you to take care of the Indians, your own people! My family is here in the wide, open forest. I want rain! Things won't grow—the earth is too dry. Everything is burning up in the heat. Nothing grows and my children are starving. Hear you not their cries of despair, you big, mighty, Great Spirit? We must have corn, so

here is some tobacco for you that you may know we are here and want rain—rain—rain!"

Nearby knelt Father Menard, crucifix in hand, deeply absorbed in prayer.

In a moment, the red chief made for the painted pole and, bowing down low before it, the dance began. The men swayed around wildly and halted and faced the east, then the north, and then the west, as they sang six songs for rain. The songs were all in a minor key and fairly glowed with an intensity of feeling that could not but inspire the heart of every brave. The tempo was quick and delightful and the parting words of the song were lost in loud tones of frenzy and delirium.

The priest was too much absorbed in his prayers to notice the dramatic attitudes of the participants in the dance. Suddenly, he felt a light touch on his shoulder. Turning, very much frightened, he saw the form of an Indian lying in the grass behind him, like a panther ready to spring up at the slightest provocation. He rose and faced the strange intruder in the high grass, as the latter raised himself on his hands and knees and whispered: "They must not see me over there. I have Iroquois blood—they have Huron blood. They do not mix well. We hate—we hate each other. I am the servant of Geronimo—big, fine, Iroquois chief, who has

camped with his braves, thirty miles from here. He calls me Flying Eagle, because I am quick and strong. Two days ago we were ready to march here and burn down Huron village but Winona, chief's only child—beautiful Iroquois princess—took very sick. Ah! she is so beautiful—her eyes are as blue as the violets in the glen. Big chief, he feel bad—he cry and stay with her in wigwam all day and all night. Geronimo—good man! He send me here for Blackrobe and ask me to bring him back to dying girl. Strong chief heard plenty story from French hunters about Blackrobe healing sick and begs him to come to him now, before the day grows too old."

An earnest look beamed in the Indian's strange eyes. For a moment he was silent, then his lips trembled and he asked almost pleadingly: "Will you go to Geronimo? His big, red heart is breaking."

A hundred thoughts thrust themselves upon Father Menard's excited imagination. What was he to do? Was he to go into the camp of the enemy and perhaps sacrifice his life? But he was prepared to die—what matter then? Just now, there was great excitement among the participants in the dance. A moment later—and Tsohahissen with his large horde of followers bounded over the grass in the direction where

Father Menard stood. One of the women, who was on her way to the shallow river for water, happened to spy the stranger in the grass. Noting that he was an Iroquois, she hastened back unnoticed to tell Tsohahissen that an enemy was in the camp.

In a moment, they were upon both, howling and shrieking like a pack of wolves. Flying Eagle sprang to his feet and faced the whole frenzied populace, that would have cut him down with a sweep of tomahawks had not the gentle Jesuit interfered. With a quick, turn of the arm, the priest raised his crucifix into the air. His face was pale and his lips were moving and, by some strange power, hundreds of hands loosened their grip on their deadly tomahawks, while disordered, angry voices suddenly ceased—and strong men, men who but a moment before possessed Herculean strength, now sank back powerless in the light that shone from the little wooden crucifix.

Then Father Menard briefly told his hearers the object of Flying Eagle's coming. "At day-break," he added, "I will leave you, my dear children. The voice of God calls me into the camp of the Iroquois. But I will return again. In the meanwhile, be good and place your hearts in your Father's care, Who is in heaven!"

Flying Eagle was the guest of the learned

Jesuit that evening and for some time they sat talking in the old lodge down by the pine trees and, when later they both fell asleep, Father Menard dreamed a beautiful dream—and he was to be the peace-maker!

CHAPTER II.

At midnight, a heavy rain was falling. Peals of loud thunder shook the earth and now and then there was a crash of falling timber. The heavens flashed continually and, in the west, inky clouds were writhing, demon-like, in a living hell of fire. Father Menard turned slightly on his couch and, slowly raised himself on his hands. Then he moved mechanically to his feet and lit the tallow candle on the table and strode sleepily across the floor. Just then there was a loud peal of thunder and crash followed crash; the poor priest's heart beat more rapidly as he said, thoughtfully: "Ah! 'tis a stormy night—but I am glad that God heard my prayer for rain. I hope that no harm may come to my Indian children!" Then he went to the window and looked out across the dreary landscape. It was a titanic battle of the elements. The rain was coming down in torrents and, when the skies again flashed lightning, he saw long rows of wigwams in the distance and more—he thought he saw the figure of a man, creeping along in the rain.

In a second, the priest was down on his knees

and, from his heart, gave thanksgiving to his God. When he rose, there was a tap at the door. Who could be out at this hour? Perhaps one of his children of the wilderness was dying and longed for his strong word to give courage to the passing soul. He lifted the latch, the door flew open and there, on the threshold, stood the figure of a man, tall and full of majesty. It was Tsohahissen, poor, old man, dripping wet.

The chief strode into the room proudly, and kissed his friend's hand. "O my good, kind father! Tsohahissen is happy. The sound of the rain has made the chief glad. He could not sleep so he left wigwam and, seeing a light in Blackrobe's window, knew that he was awake and came here to thank him for his prayers. His God has been good to us and given us rain. Rain-dance no good—chief and braves danced full time but no rain. Chief now wise and will dance no more." Tsohahissen's voice trembled and his eyes had a faraway look in them. Then, suddenly, he clutched his battle-axe and sprang to the door.

"Oh, my son," interceded the priest, "you must not go now; wait till the storm is over."

Tsohahissen's face wrinkled into a smile, as he shook his head and said carelessly: "Big chief fears neither thunder, lightning nor rain. He loves it—but wife and child are all alone in

wigwam and they wait Tsohahissen's return."

Then he raised himself straight as an arrow, his fiery eyes fairly sparkled, there was a sudden sweep of his right arm and almost instantly he sprang out into the darkness and rain.

CHAPTER III.

When the dawn purpled the eastern hills, Father Menard and Flying Eagle left the lodge, the latter carrying a canoe on his strong shoulders. When they were gone, Nanette, the trusty French maid, who had come to the wilderness twenty years ago with her priest-cousin, gently closed the door and sighed deeply. That morning she thought she had noticed a strange look in the Blackrobe's eyes, such as she had never seen before and, in her heart, she wondered if he would ever come back to Notre Dame de Larette alive. He had been a father to her and, now that he would be gone for some time, the little lodge down by the pine trees would become very lonely.

When the two reached the river shore, they were greeted on all sides by the Indians, who stood waiting to give them a royal farewell. Tsohahissen strode sadly to the gentle priest's side and was engaged in earnest conversation for some minutes.

"Iroquois hate Hurons!" he muttered, nervously. "I fear they will capture and kill our good father and Blackrobe will return to our

homes no more. I am sad, for I love you," and his lips trembled, overcome with emotion.

The kind-faced priest raised his hand and, laying it on Tsohahissen's shoulder, said consolingly: "Fear not, great chief! I am going on an errand of peace. Geronimo is calling me—his child needs me. My life is in God's hands and I will have nothing to fear. With Him I can face any danger. And some day, who knows, Geronimo and Tsohahissen may yet become great friends—and I will join the two large families into one."

Tsohahissen opened his eyes eagerly and shook his feather-crowned head, as if what the priest had said was nigh to impossible.

In another few minutes Father Menard was in the canoe and Flying Eagle's strong arms raised the paddles in the air. Another second and they smote the water. There was great splashing and gurgling and the two were off, and long the Indians stood and watched until the canoe and its occupants seemed like a small speck on the distant, blue waters.

For evenings after, there was one solitary watcher on the river shore. It was Tsohahissen—poor man! His red face bore a saddened look as he gazed into the troubled, angry waters. Again and again he raised his hand to his mouth and shouted wild-sounding words into the lonely

night around him, but the splashing, moaning waves alone made answer.

It was late when Father Menard and Flying Eagle reached their destination. The good priest was very tired—most of the journey having been made on foot. Geronimo stood waiting at the edge of the forest in the moonlight to extend his friendly greeting and escort the illustrious visitor to the village. The great chief of the Iroquois was a very old man; his shoulders were slightly stooped but his gait was still strong and steady. On his fierce, swarthy, rough face, however, which was surrounded by a mass of raven-black hair, one could see a few soft lines, that were ready to run into a smile at the slightest provocation. His cheek-bones were very prominent, his glance was quick and penetrating and somewhat stern, but it melted into kindness, as he eyed the Blackrobe intently.

In the central part of the village, a bonfire was glowing and, thickly grouped around, sat the braves, holding their pipes and smoking in silence. When the party drew nearer, Flying Eagle gave one shrill cry and went to the anxious faces, staring into the flames. In a moment he was among them and all the men took up the cry. It was so loud and shrill that bird and beast alike became suddenly frightened.

When Geronimo drew near, leading Father

Menard by the arm, heads turned and hundreds of eyes flashed suddenly upon the Blackrobe, who looked with a kindly face upon them all. They had heard much about this great man and they looked upon him with a feeling of awe.

"Come!" said Geronimo kindly to the priest, "you must be hungry—the meal is ready," and together they sat down at a rude table nearby and partook freely of venison and choice cuts of salmon and white-meated partridges, served on hard, beechwood platters.

The old chief spoke tenderly of Winona and when Father Menard answered, in the Iroquois tongue, that he would do all he could to save the life of the sick child, the earnest red-face burst into a smile of gratitude.

When the two entered Geronimo's wigwam, but a few feet away, the chattering voices outside suddenly ceased. The braves loved their chief—to them he was greatness itself. His arrows never missed in a chase, his battle-axe and spear never failed to draw blood in battle. He was skilled in magic and knew the language of beast and bird. And above all he was wealthy. When the priest entered the wigwam his glance at once took in the surroundings. Scattered about everywhere were rich furs of black fox, snowy ermine, brown otter, beaver and deer. Spears, war-axes, bows, arrows, tomahawks,

shields and much bead-work hung from every corner.

Upon several fine skins of snowy ermine lay Winona—the dying girl—the glory of Geronimo's wild heart. She could not have been more than eighteen, this lovely princess of a mighty nation. She was extremely beautiful—her face had no rough lines or prominent angles. It was so un-Indian-like. Her complexion, too, was not that deep bronze, but a very soft, light yellow. Her lips had the color of the crimson twilight, her long, flowing hair was black as the night. Necklaces of white beads and strings of wampum lay on her throbbing bosom, and her dress was of fine deer skin, thinned and cured so that it was soft as silk. A pair of fine buckskin moccasins, embroidered with quill-work, beads and shells, covered her feet. Beside her knelt the "medicine-man." He was gaunt and wild-eyed and it seemed almost incredible that a heart could go on beating and sustain life in so thin and wasted a body. But he was a power in his community—this strange-looking individual with the white, flowing hair, the long fingernails and muffled monotonous.

"Wise as the wisest in council grave,

He sat with the chiefs around him -

He knew of the roots that ever save;

He sought them down by the Blackstream's wave,

He knew the star of each warrior brave

And knew where the fates had found him."

Yesterday, at sunrise, he had come to Gero-

nimo. His herbs and roots had proved powerless to stay the steady ravages of the disease, and he mumbled distractedly: "Winona must die! I know it—I feel it. For two full days the white flower near the river has been fading in the sunlight—and whenever it fades, some one dies. Winona cannot live to see another day." It was then that Flying Eagle was dispatched for the Blackrobe.

When Father Menard approached Winona, the medicine-man slunk away stealthily and disappeared. The sick child only smiled faintly. The priest laid his finger on her pulse—it was very weak and fluttering, almost imperceptible. Her body was cold and covered with a clammy perspiration.

"The heart is failing, it must be stimulated at once," added the priest-doctor, as he opened his satchel and took from it a small vial. Quickly he poured out a few drops of a light liquid into a little glass syringe, filled it partly with water, and injected it into the girl's arm. Then he filled several earthen jars with hot water and placed them around the child to induce reaction and overcome the state of collapse that Winona had fallen into. Geronimo eyed the priest intently and then asked: "Will Winona, my beautiful princess, live?"

The learned Jesuit merely raised his eyes and

answered: "I will be better able to tell later on. I will do my best."

To Geronimo, Winona was everything. Since her mother's death, two years ago, she had been to him a consolation and a companion.

In thirty minutes the hypodermic injection was repeated—the heart had not yet responded to the stimulus. Small pellets, containing some active medicinal substance were also given the girl. In a few moments, Winona's eyes closed and she drifted into a calm, refreshing sleep.

Father Menard then strode to the chief's side. "You must lie down, Geronimo—it is late. You look tired and worn out and to-night you must have a few hours of quiet sleep. I will watch the sick child and, if anything happens, I will call you."

Geronimo at first refused bluntly, but soon the priest's gentle voice mastered the latter's feelings and he sank down upon a pile of buffalo skins and was soon asleep.

The missionary stole to the side of the sick girl—she was sleeping quietly. He felt her pulse and his eyes brightened instantly. Again he raised his eyes to heaven and laying his crucifix upon her breast, prayed in silence. Without, strong winds shrieked and whistled through the writhing branches, and now and then the mournful cry of some wild animal in the forest stole

into the lonely wigwam. But neither disturbed the sick child and the devoted watcher at her bed-side.

The medicine had been administered at regular intervals and towards morning the priest woke Geronimo from his sleep. The chief yawned, opened and rubbed his eyes, and when he saw the Blackrobe bending over him, a great and mighty fear penetrated every muscle in his body. He shook visibly as he raised himself to his knees.

"Ah! I knew it—she is dead!" he exclaimed, almost with distraction. "Winona is dead—dead! I felt it—I knew it. In my sleep I heard the Northwind calling—and he was calling her—my beautiful daughter—my queen—my Winona!"

Then his head fell into his large, brown hands and he sobbed like a child.

"Geronimo!" exclaimed the priest eagerly. "Raise yourself! Winona is not dead, but lives—lives I say. This morn there is much life in that sick body of yester-night. The danger is past. Winona will not die, but she will live to bless, as princess, the hearts of her Iroquois children."

Quickly he led Geronimo to the sick child, who

greeted both with a smile that lingered for some time on two bright, rosy lips.

Geronimo bent over the beautiful form and stroked the black locks gently, while Father Menard brushed aside the heavy curtains at the doorway and left the wigwam. And for some minutes father and child were alone.

The sky was a mass of slate-colored clouds, but far in the East, through the distant cedars and hemlocks, a few long lines of red light told of the birth of another day. The birds were stirring in the trees and flocks of wild geese in the grassy marshes were eyeing the skies to take their morning cruise. On a distant mountain top, a lonely elk bugled forth glad welcomes to the infant day, that lay cradled in the lap of the rosy dawn.

The priest's responsive heart beat gladly within him as his eyes drank in the beauty of the morning hour, and almost suddenly the sun smiled upon the face of nature. Soon there was a great stir in the village. Hundreds of wigwams threw forth their occupants and women were running around every-where, preparing the morning meal.

Father Menard quit his place and silently entered the wigwam. There he saw a beautiful picture—one he did not expect to see so soon—and it was all arranged, in his short absence, by the artistic fingers of a powerful Creator. On her

snowy bed of costly ermine lay Winona—her glowing face bright in the pure sunlight that stole through a few cracks in the wigwam above, her eyes riveted upon the kneeling figure of her father at the bed-side. Geronimo's head was bowed and in his hands he held fast the crucifix, which the priest had placed upon Winona's breast in the night-time. His eyes were closed and his lips moved slowly and reverently.

Father Menard stood transfixed for a moment, for Winona moved slowly and he thought he had disturbed the quiet serenity of the scene. In an instant, he sank upon his knees and covered his face as he whispered faintly: "O God! I thank thee!" For some time, all knelt in silence, and to the good priest it seemed that the very wigwam was peopled and alive with other sweet-faced beings, who had stolen in with the sunlight and, in his heart, he felt that he had heard the stir and rustle of angels' wings.

Just then a shadow glided noiselessly into the wigwam. For a second, two eyes rested lovingly upon Winona and a smile crept into the anxious, fierce, red face of the intruder and, when a moment later he brushed aside the heavy curtains with his bow and made for the mountains in search of game, a sigh of relief burst from his lips. It was Flying Eagle, and in his wild heart was cloistered a holy secret.

CHAPTER IV.

One month had passed and Winona had fully recovered from her illness and Father Menard was beginning to think of his homeward journey. Much had come to pass in all this time and the good priest felt elated, and justly so. Geronimo and Winona had both become deeply interested in the story of the Christ and many were the searching questions the Blackrobe answered. One thing alone troubled him sorely. On several occasions, Geronimo had given utterance to his great hatred of the Hurons. But he said nothing of their intended invasion.

One evening the three sat together in front of the chief's wigwam. Father Menard had just pictured the birth of the infant at Bethlehem and now the spell of silence was upon all. Up in the beeches overhead, a number of squirrels nibbled and frisked exultingly and, several yards away, a limpid brook made sweet music for tired souls.

The priest ran his fingers thoughtlessly through his beads, and Winona gazed upon him intently. Suddenly Geronimo's strong voice broke the lethargy of the moment: "To-morrow the Blackrobe leaves us and we will miss his kind face.

Chief and daughter will be lonely without him and the wigwam will not be as bright when he is gone. But he will come again—often—and tell us stories of his good God. The way is not long and Flying Eagle will always accompany him. He knows every path in the big forest." The chief eyed the priest for a moment and his voice melted into a tone of pathos, when he asked: "Will Blackrobe forget us or will he come again, as a friend, to the camp of the Iroquois?" "Certainly, my good man!" answered the priest, as he rose from the wooden bench. "I will come again—often—to see you. Twice every seven days, in snow or rain, the Blackrobe will journey to your village and, as sign of trust, he leaves his crucifix with Geronimo. Great chief! I will be happy to meet you and your braves here whenever I come, and you will find in me a good friend," and he handed Geronimo his precious crucifix, as a pledge of his promise.

The old man took the proffered token and pressed it to his bosom. Winona, too, was pleased. Slowly she rose and took the Blackrobe's hand in her own. "I am so glad you will come again," she said. "Winona wants to become your friend and learn more about your God."

Just then, Geronimo strode out of the wigwam and soon returned with a bundle of rich furs and skins under his arm. "Geronimo brings his

costliest furs and skins to the good Blackrobe," he said kindly, "and asks him to accept them in payment for his trouble and services. Skins and furs are good—the best. They will bring in much money at the trading post."

The priest thanked him kindly in the Iroquois tongue and added: "But keep your skins and furs, my friend! I do not seek to rob you of these treasures. Only give me your good will—and more—will you let me name my own reward?"

"With pleasure, O my father!" answered Geronimo thoughtfully.

"May I ask you, then, in the name of my God, Geronimo, to give up all thought of your pre-arranged attack on the Hurons, who dwell peacefully in yonder village? Their lives are dear to me—for I love them. I know the virulence of an Iroquois' hatred—but you must not harm my children! Will you promise?"

Geronimo tossed his head arrogantly and bit his lips in anger. That demon-hatred was again lashing his soul, his face was redder than ever. It seemed as if every drop of blood in his body had suddenly run to his head to stimulate his thoughts. An indignant look crept into his face, as he stepped about proudly, and he was on the verge of refusing, when his eyes stole from the priest to Winona. She trembled and, when he saw that the tears were gathering in her eyes, a

shrill cry smote the air and he exclaimed, almost wildly, as his fingers tightened about the crucifix: "Geronimo promises! Geronimo promises! Black-robe's children shall live in peace!" and he sprang to the priest's side and took the outstretched hand in his own.

CHAPTER V.

When Father Menard again returned to Notre Dame de Larette all hearts were glad. Tsohahissen, himself, had gone down the river in his canoe to meet him at sundown. Nanette also felt glad and, in the little lodge by the pine trees, the table was set and a brisk fire was burning in the grate and the trusty maid sang lustily, as she knitted carelessly. There was a rap at the door. A bright look stole into Nanette's brown eyes when the door opened wide to let in Father Menard. Gladly she sprang forward to meet him.

"Well, Nanette," he exclaimed tenderly after the evening meal was over, "any news from France, from home—from Gabrielle? Any letters, post-cards, parcels?"

"Yes, my dear cousin. Fatiste, the French trader, brought a letter yesterday. Let me hope it contains nothing but good news!" and from the drawer she took the treasured envelope.

"Ah, yes," explained the priest, "from Paris—from the dear Countess Boulanger," as he opened it carefully. Then slowly he read the contents to Nanette and several times he paused to wipe his tearful eyes:

"Paris, July 16—

"My Dear Son:—Your last letter arrived safely. We were glad to hear of your good work among the Indians. God is with you in that distant land—no wonder, then, that you are happy and contented. Twenty years ago you left our beautiful chateau, and what long years they were for Gabrielle and myself! But soon the spell is to be broken. Gabrielle has practiced medicine in Paris faithfully for ten years and needs a rest badly, and he is going to America to visit you. In another month he sets sail and, not being married, will be free to stay with you as long as he wishes. I would also like to go, my dear child, but rheumatism has crippled me in my old days and the journey would be too much for me. I suffer much—but then it is sweet to suffer one's Calvary in this life. Your brother has been good to me and I will miss him so, but, for your sake, I will make the sacrifice. I am sending you two large boxes, containing much that will be of use to you in your forest home. I also enclose several dresses for Nanette—the good child! Give her my love. I will write her in two weeks; my rheumatism is bad today and my fingers are very sore.

"Pray for me often, my child, for God knows my life's sun is now westering near the horizon! I will never forget you or Gabrielle, for I have

loved you both, as if you had been my own children.

"Let me hear from you again when the next ship sails.

"Your dear,

"Fanchon Boulanger."

The days wore on and summer faded into autumn, and one day in October, when the winds were cold and the trees were aflame with color, Gabrielle entered Notre Dame de Larette with his French guide, tired and exhausted, glad that the long journey was at an end. The good priest embraced him warmly. Nanette was also overjoyed, and for hours the three sat together in the candle-light, chatting briskly of old friends and old scenes of sunny France. Father Menard was the picture of happiness—his face softening into a smile, as from time to time he puffed his quaint old Normandy pipe. Gabrielle was very talkative, and often the priest's eyes rested on the handsome figure of his brother in the fire-light, with his thickly set shoulders and manly brow. His face was fresh and ruddy and on it were written lines of tenderness and expression. Two dark, dreamy eyes—such as poets love to sing of—flashed continually and softened into sunshiny smiles. Verily, he was a fine specimen of manhood—a sturdy young oak, erect, strong and promising in the fresh light of life's morning.

CHAPTER VI.

The winter passed slowly by, and Gabrielle often accompanied his brother on his visits to the Iroquois village. The Indians received both kindly and the work in the mission was prospering. Hearts that had been cold now grew warmer; minds expanded and life held forth loftier ideals to these poor red children. A new awakening was taking place, a new dawn was fast breaking, its rosy East aglow with many large-limbed hopes and resolves.

To Gabrielle, this wild life of the forest seemed glorious; he fairly revelled in the new, clean atmosphere about him. The days seemed so bright and the minutes so fleeting and joyous. Some strange thing had stolen into his being. He felt he was a different man—he knew it. Ever since his first visit to the Iroquois village, the halls of his memory were lively with interest. A new people thronged its corridors and, above all else, the sunlight of a woman's face—Winona's—was continually upon him. Go where he might, there she stood before him, young, vivacious and beautiful. He could not forget her. From out that new sea of faces hers stood out,

clear and distinct, singular, striking and beautiful, and, above all, so un-Indian-like—a face that would have set the brain of sculptor and artist alike mad with delight.

All that winter and following spring Gabrielle had not breathed a word of his admiration of Winona to his priest-brother. Both toiled faithfully on, the one tending to the bodily, the other to the spiritual wants of the two Indian missions. But in his heart Gabrielle treasured many a happy secret. The warm admiration of those first days was now leading him into avenues, rich with asphodel and rose, and here it was a new and mighty feeling overpowered him which made of life a beautiful abode, where flowers shone brightly and birds sang unceasingly to the heart that had never before realized what it was to love an ideal woman. Love had stolen in gradually and quietly and, now that she had placed her delicate fingers upon him, his temples throbbed hotly and he often dreamed of a day in the future and prayed that his dream might come true.

A year and a half passed by and many happy hours had Gabrielle spent in Winona's company. He had studied hard and now conversed freely in the Iroquois tongue. Winona, too, proved herself an apt pupil of the former and was quite happy in being able to express herself in French. Geronimo, also, was delighted with his daugh-

ter's progress and, in his eyes, Gabrielle was the sum-total of perfection itself.

One evening, late in summer, the Indians were gathered in an open space listening attentively to Father Menard's words of gratitude. Now, that the last barriers between the Hurons and the Iroquois had crumbled away, the good priest felt elated that at last the two nations had signed a treaty to be on friendly terms with each other. But an hour ago the peace proceedings had been in progress. Tsohahissen had come in person to extend the good wishes of his people and Geronimo received him kindly. And, now, they sat side by side, the two strong heads of the two villages, the two chiefs who had often clashed battle-axes, the two men who had nourished a fierce and deadly hatred for years, no longer enemies but friends—both having white souls to redeem, with God as common Father and Master.

Gabrielle and Winona had stolen away from the crowd to a bench in a thicket of saplings, not far off, and the glorious moon, that hung like a golden crescent above the spruces and hemlocks and gray hills, seemed to pause on her journey and listen for the sound of their glad voices.

Gabrielle's hand stole warmly into Winona's and for a moment silence reigned, while the

music of a distant water-fall played a strange interlude. At last Gabrielle's lips parted. "Winona!" he exclaimed passionately, "the longer I look into your glowing eyes, the hotter burns this fever within, that has been consuming me for many a day. I would have told you long ago but I dared not. I was afraid lest you might crush me. You are the little princess of my heart's kingdom—Winona! I love you! Hear me—Winona—I love you! Will you become my wife?" And, unconsciously, he drew her to his breast and their lips met—but it was only for a second.

Winona's face looked white in the moonlight and she raised herself from him like a frightened bird. It was all so sudden and her heart was at a standstill. "Love me Gabrielle? How can you?" she spoke tremblingly. "I am only an Indian—you are so grand, so noble, so good. You should despise me—and yet you say you love me. No! No! I cannot become your wife, and yet—and yet—" She paused a moment, her cheeks were hot and in her eyes tears gathered. "And yet," she sobbed, "I love you, Gabrielle. I had never known what love was until you came."

Silently her hand stole into his and she drew herself to him, like some frail thing seeking protection in his strong arms.

Just then there was a stir in the thicket but the two did not heed it. In a moment two wild, fiery eyes were riveted on them. The moonlight was full upon the gloating, angry face; the teeth were set, the eyes were hateful, fiery balls and, from them, shone a demon-like despair. It was Flying Eagle. Wolf-like, he had tracked the innocent lamb to her lair; his eyes had looked on a scene he had too well expected, and, as he raised his lithe body into the air, there was a look of determination in them as he whispered hotly: "You pale-face! I hate you! I will kill you! Yes, kill you—you French dog! You love Winona—ha! ha! She will yet be mine and I will step over your corpse to make her my bride. Flying Eagle loves Winona with all his wild, red heart but he hates, and will kill, the French dog!" Then he stood ready to spring upon them both like some wild thing, but he bit his lips and raised his clenched fist into the air and, with a curse on his lips, crept through the long grass, like a deadly, hissing snake.

That night Gabrielle opened his heart to his brother and told him how he had decided to spend the remainder of his days with the Indians and, at some time in the near future, take Winona unto himself as wife. The priest was pleased and inwardly congratulated himself that he had such a brother and that he was to get so

handsome and virtuous a wife as Winona. At first the question of caste thrust itself upon him, and the thought of his brother marrying an Indian caused him to revolt inwardly, but in an instant the feeling left him.

"She is good," he thought. "Winona is one of God's creatures and her soul is just as white and pure in His eyes as that of any white woman."

CHAPTER VII.

Preparations for the marriage ceremony had been in progress for some weeks. The heart of Geronimo never beat more proudly than on the night Winona told him of Gabrielle's love and devotion. To-morrow, at sunrise, Mass was to be celebrated at the altar in the grove of pines nearby, and Father Menard was to pronounce the two, man and wife. The whole Huron tribe, led by Tsohahissen, were invited and would attend the ceremony in a body and, with the Iroquois decked in all their battle array, the congregation would no doubt not only be great in numbers but also grand in their gorgeous display of finery and color.

Only one soul in the two villages was restless. It was Flying Eagle. Not many moons before the last winter had set in, he had told Winona of his love for her—but she had spurned him and he had never forgiven her for it. And, strange, he still loved her. The roots had grown down too deeply into his heart. During all the days that passed, he had played his part so well that no one suspected treachery on his part. He stood a favorite in all their eyes, especially in Geron-

imo's. Winona, too, thought that the old-time love for her was all forgotten, and happily awaited the morrow.

That night, after the whole village was asleep, the figure of a man could be seen gliding through the grove of pine trees, where the altar stood ready for the morrow's ceremony. It was Flying Eagle. Where was he going? Had his last plans, to which straws of hope he had clung like a dying man, been again frustrated and was he now making good his escape to die out among the lonely hills in despair?

CHAPTER VIII.

Early next morning the Indians were astir with excitement. Throngs of Hurons and Iroquois swarmed the forest—men, women and children of all ages and sizes—and the chatter of their many voices drowned the music of the large river that flowed through the nearby marshes. Presently, the chimes announced the hour for Mass. All betook themselves to the pine grove. Father Menard was robing for the Mass. Geronimo and Tsohahissen were already in their places, and near the front knelt Winona and Gabrielle, their faces aglow with an almost superhuman joy.

When the Mass began, a silence as of the tomb, fell upon the kneeling multitude. Not even a child cried or spoke, and there were many present. All was happiness and quiet, save for the sweet-voiced choristers in the trees, intoning their litanies of joy. It was a happy hour—

“breathless with adoration,”

and many an eye followed the officiating priest at the altar. And now the priest turned, facing the people, chalice in hand, and, as the chimes

rang out three times, all heads were bowed in prayer. Slowly, reverently, he walked towards the kneeling pair and, bowing, administered to both the Communion. Both knelt in prayer for a moment and then rose to go to their seats. No sooner had they turned, facing the crowd, when an arrow whizzed quickly through the air. Few had seen it—it had come so rapidly—but all heard the shrill cry that came from a staggering woman's lips.

Father Menard turned and, rushing from the altar, saw what had happened just as Gabrielle caught Winona in his arms. The arrow had only grazed her cheek, and a look of gratitude was on the priest's kindly, old face. By this time the people were panic-stricken but the priest motioned them back.

They laid Winona down gently in the grass and for a moment the two brothers watched the pale face of the stricken woman. Just then, a second arrow hissed through the air, striking the priest's breast just as he had bent over to bathe Winona's dry lips with water.

The poor, old priest raised himself suddenly, his trembling hands on the arrow that stuck fast. A sickly groan escaped from him and he sank to the ground, powerless—a dying man—on his lips a word of prayer to his Maker and his God.

The Indians had now swarmed around the dy-

ing priest, their hearts sick with sorrow. The whole forest was filled with sobbing men, women and children. Tsohahissen and Geronimo were at Father Menard's side and Gabrielle was busy administering restoratives and dressing the wound. The arrow had pierced the priest's heart. He could not live.

Suddenly there was a crash as of breaking timber, and the faithful priest's eyes opened just in time to see a man, bow and arrow in hand, falling to earth. The branch of a pine tree overhead, on which the murderer had been standing and hiding, had broken at the worst possible time—only to deliver him into the hands of his captors. It was Flying Eagle—his weight had been too much for the bough, from which he had sent his deadly arrows.

"Kill him! Kill him!" came from hundreds of throats, as he fell to the ground. Tsohahissen and Geronimo sprang from the priest's side, their faces aflame with a bitter anger.

The dying priest heard the cry. He opened his eyes and motioned the two chiefs back, as he said huskily: "No! no! You must not kill him—I forgive Flying Eagle. Do not touch a hair of his head! God alone has the right to punish and take life. I die happy—my—work—is done—and—I—see the gates—of heaven—opening. I—have—been the peace-maker—I—am going

—into—the Light! Good-bye—Gabrielle!—
Good-bye—Winona!—Good-bye—all!” The
trembling hands slowly raised the crucifix to the
lips—the passing soul hovered a moment on the
brink of eternity—and then life was extinct.

Gabrielle stole to Winona's side and wept
bitterly. Now that his brother had passed out
of his young life forever, his heart was fast
breaking. There was nothing to comfort him,
for Winona still lay there unconscious. Would
her soul, also, pass through those golden gates
into the land where it is always morning?
Would her eyes never open again—if only for a
moment—that he might look into their blue
depths? Oh! if she would only wake that he
might speak but one word to her before she goes!

The people were wild with excitement and the
mob would have torn Flying Eagle to pieces had
not Tsohahissen and Geronimo interceded.
Both bore painful expressions—they realized
that the great friend of the red man was gone
and amidst a flow of tears tried to assuage the
sorrow of their people.

The Blackrobe's tender voice was forever
hushed and their hearts were breaking, for they
knew that never again would it music forth mel-
odies to tired hearts from life's plaintive keys.
And the touch of that gentle hand! How the
children would wait in vain, through the long

winters and summers, for the little pat on their chubby cheeks, which he never forgot to give. Geronimo at once returned to the side of his daughter after he had spoken to his people. Winona stirred restlessly. Her face grew warmer and her eyes suddenly opened. They greeted Gabrielle's.

"Where am I? What has happened?" she sighed faintly. "O, take me away from here! You are crying—and on our wedding-day! Everything seems so strange to me—and father—he is crying. Oh! what is the matter? Am I dreaming?" The two men could not speak—their hearts were breaking with grief.

Then she turned her head. Her eyes fell upon the body of the priest nearby, whose face bore a smile and looked heavenwards. Winona raised herself on her arms and stared vainly. "He is dead—Oh! the Blackrobe is dead!" she sobbed and fell back overcome with emotion.

And, for some time, the three wept together.

CHAPTER IX.

Flying Eagle was surrounded and watched all that day, but in the night made his escape and, being fleet of foot, easily outman his pursuers. And from that day on not a soul ever heard of Flying Eagle again.

It is thought that in some lonely spot far beyond the eastern hills, far away from the sound of human voice, he spends sunless and miserable days, without friend, without rest. Even the wild animals of the glen seem to spurn him like some deadly, loathsome thing. His life is a torture and a burden and his heart suffers a remorse that is known only to those who feel the silent penalty of crime.

For days Winona's life hung by a thread. The arrow that had grazed her cheek had been poisoned with curari—that deadly Indian poison—and a violent toxæmia fast undermined her vitality.

Gabrielle called all the resources of his profession to his aid and fought the disease vigorously and, when he felt that he was going to win, his heart gave a bound of joy that set his nerves a-tingling. Winona was to live after all—and he thanked God for it.

CHAPTER X.

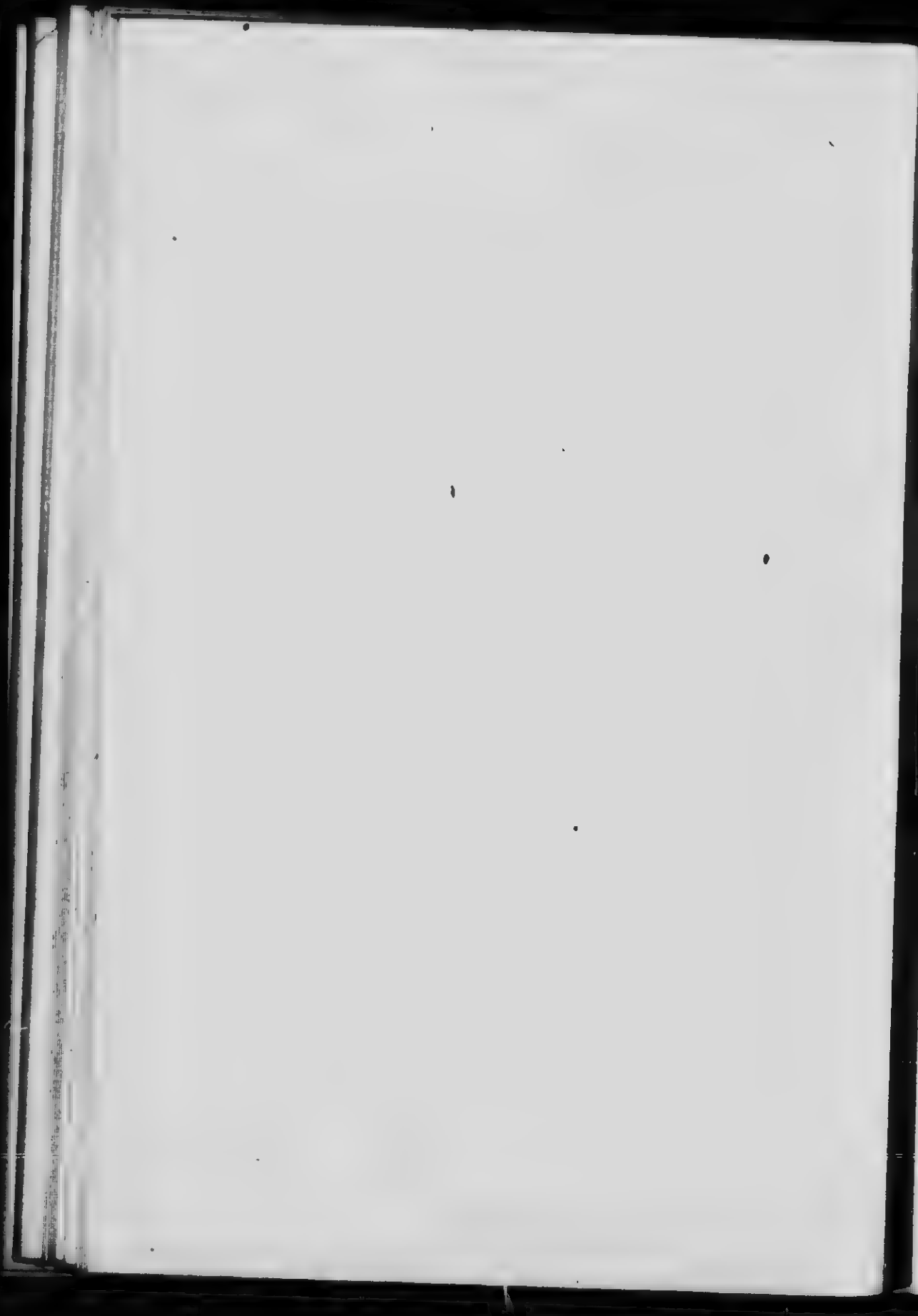
Years and years have passed since the opening chapter in this story. The Huron and Iroquois tribes are no more. Another race of men inhabit the country where once they lived and roamed. Notre Dame de Larette is only a memory of other days. In its place, a great city has risen up, filled with the spirit of a happy progress. The little chapel down by the pine grove, which stands to this day, is the only relic of the past. Gabrielle erected it over his brother's grave. In it also rest all that is earthly of Winona and Gabrielle.

A few, old settlers still remain and, sitting by the fireside on the cold winter evenings, with pipes in hand, they love to tell the tale of these red children, as they heard it in the long ago from the lips of some reminiscent grandfa'her or grandmother. And then the story of Winona and Gabrielle flowers in their minds, and the heroic mission of the good old Blackrobe, who struggled on and fought the fight for nearly a quarter of a century, and eyes grow moist and hearts expand and burn with love for those silent figures that grace the brilliant kaleidoscope

of the past in a back-ground of spreading spruce, maple and pine.

And, as long as men are men, such honest, good souls as Father Menard—men who fight the battle in life's most secluded and despised fields, will ever occupy a lasting place in the silent niches of the world's great martyrs.

Winona and Gabrielle also live in the hearts of the people and to this day even the little children love to sit around and listen to the story of the beautiful bride of the forest.



THE PROFESSOR'S SECRET.

CHAPTER I.

A few gleams of sunshine stole playfully into the large, cheerful music room and threw their dreamy shadows on a white, marble bust of Beethoven that stood on the piano in the corner. Signor Francesco Bottini had been busy most of the afternoon and there, at his table he still sat, pouring over the manuscripts of a new Requiem Mass, which he had just completed. His eyes had a satisfied look in them, and, deep in his heart, he knew that he had written his masterpiece—something that would at last ring itself into the ears of the musical critics.

Presently, he rose and walked to the window and, brushing back the heavy damask curtains, his eyes wandered down into the busy, throbbing street, pulsating with life. Dear old St. Patrick's across the street, looked radiant in her twilight glory and over the distant, lone, blue hills the sun was throwing his last, bright shafts of light. Without, everything was bright and cheerful, but within the heart of the old professor, all was dark and desolate. As he stood there one could not

help but admire him—this son of vineclad, sunny Italy. He was not very tall, in years about sixty, and there was a bold sweep of fullness in his appearance. His hair was black as the raven and it somewhat intensified the golden tint of his complexion. On his face were written earnestness, refinement and great depth of character. It was a face of marvellous sweetness and great gentleness and, yet, there was a latent sadness in those dark, fiery, dancing eyes, whose secret no one could understand, much less fathom.

For a moment, Signor Bottini sighed heavily and, turning, walked over and sat down at his piano. His eyes were moist and his fingers trembled, as they moved slowly over the cold, ivory keys. He was playing the "Miserere"—the heart-song of Verdi, his fellow-countryman and teacher—and the sad, plaintive tones seemed to find an echo in his lonely soul. The tender air, that followed, was sweet and stirring. It also seemed to appeal strongly to the Signor's present feelings and several large tears rolled down his cheeks.

"Hortense!" he whispered tenderly, "Hortense! O Jesu! Blessed Jesu have mercy on her soul!"

There was a rap at the door and, suddenly, a well-drest, young Italian entered. It was An-

gelico, the professor's trusty office-boy and his voice had a ring of freshness in it when he said:

"Signor! Mademoiselle Laporte!"

The old man read the perfumed card and exclaimed: "Please show the young lady up-stairs, Angelico!"

The door closed gently and, in a few moments, opened again. "I am delighted to see you, Signor," came from the handsome, young woman, as she entered the study, gowned in a simple dress of black. "But you are not well—you look—"

"I am pretty well, Felice," interrupted the professor. "'Tis true, I look somewhat strange—but that is nothing, child. You see I am so troubled and worried with my new Mass and this accounts for it. But pardon me, how are you, Felice? I have missed you in my study. You were always so bright and cheerful."

The soft, deep eyes—blue as the sea—suddenly opened and the young woman replied somewhat nervously: "I am not well, Signor. There is a wound deep in my heart, that Time alone can heal. Since God, in His wisdom, took Hortense away from us, our home has been empty. With her went its brightest sunbeam, its purest flower and its highest and noblest inspiration. Six months have gone by since that sad day and

dear, old mother's heart will never be the same again. To-day mother asked me to open the piano. It was the first time for many days. I sang for her and when I turned she was smiling. It was the first smile I had seen on mother's face in all these long, weary months—and, oh, it made my heart so glad. Then she came over and put her hand on my shoulder and said: "Felice, my child, you must call in and see Signor Bottini and arrange with him for your singing lessons. The house is empty since Hortense sings no more. I miss her in the parlor, in the cathedral, in the concert-hall—here, there, everywhere—and I want you to take her place."

Signor, will you then for mother's sake, for Hortense's sake, take an interest in me?"

"Certainly, Felice," answered the dear, old musician. "For your mother's sake, for Hortense's sake, I will do anything. There are great possibilities in your voice, my child, and I know you will succeed because you work diligently. Only to-day I met Father O'Brien and he regretted that Hortense's place had not yet been filled in the choir. 'The pure, innocent soul,' he said, 'how we have missed her! But God knew best. He heard her voice. It was clear and penetrating like a lark's and He called her to sing His praises, in that heavenly choir, whose sweetness surpasses all understanding.'

Felice! the position is open. Work hard—and you may yet fill your dead sister's place."

When Felice Laporte was gone, Signor Bottini heaved a sigh of relief. The young girl had not surmised, in fact did not know, that the very mention of Hortense's name was extremely painful to him and recalled many precious memories, that echoed through the sacred aisles of the past. He walked to the window—the day was getting darker and down in the streets the newsboys were busy. Then he stirred the fire in the grate and, for a long time, watched the flames leaping wildly in their mad endeavor to get away up the chimney. Then he sank into an arm-chair and burying his face in his hands, whispered under his breath:

"You may yet fill your dead sister's place! Ah, yes! you may—but there is one place your voice can never reach, Felice. It is the audience-chamber of my heart and when Hortense—bright bird—stopped singing, I closed its doors upon the cold world forever."

CHAPTER II.

Mademoiselle Hortense Laporte, though young in years, had been a power in her native city. Everywhere she was heralded as a musical prodigy—a born artist—and her beautiful, cultivated voice stamped her at once as one of the leading prima donnas. Signor Bottini was proud of his talented pupil and wrote an opera especially for her, in which she fairly electrified her audiences with her marvellous, soprano voice. She had many rich triumphs—yet, withal, hers was the self-same, unassuming, beautiful, christian character, that won its way right into the heart of everyone. She was loved by all classes of people and the poor of many cities were pleased to call her their queen of song, because she had repeatedly given so much of her income and services to lighten their burdens. But in the height of her glory she was stricken down with the fever, while watching at the bedside of her widowed mother and alas! never recovered from the attack. Her death was regretted everywhere and especially in her native city and none felt her loss more keenly than Signor Bottini. Often he would say to himself: “Since Hortense has

gone out of my life, I feel so lonely. My nights are restless and my days are sunless." Then he would mutter loving words and ask God to bless his lost one with eternal sunshine and happiness.

The days were getting longer and, with his many pupils and choir rehearsals, Bottini was an overworked man. The members of the St. Patrick's choir were simply delighted with the new Requiem Mass and all were diligently preparing their respective parts. Felice, too, was putting her whole soul into her music and Signor Bottini was more than pleased with his new "l'enfant adorable," for she was, without a doubt, the most promising of his many pupils.

One day she came to his cozy studio for her lesson and expressed her delight at finding the Signor in better spirits. "Ah, Signor!" she said. "I am delighted to find you so happy. Do you know, I often used to wonder why the heart of my old professor should always be so sad."

Signor Bottini raised himself up in his chair, straight as an arrow, and said, with much feeling: "Felice, my past has many tender memories and the poet strikes the proper keynote when he sings:

"There is in each life some time or spot,
Some hour or moment of night or day,
That never grows dim and is never forgot

Like an unfaded leaf in a dead bouquet.
Some rare season, however brief,
That stands forever and aye the same—
A sweet, bright picture in bas-relief
Hanging before us in Memory's frame."

Felice Laporte stood like one transfixed, staring into space and did not seem to understand or catch the meaning of those words.

When the lesson was over Signor Bottini rose from the piano and complained of being dizzy. He walked a few steps; a strange, wild look crept into his face—he tottered from side to side, then staggered and fell to the floor with a heavy crash. Felice uttered a wild cry and Angelico, upon hearing the noise, quickly ran upstairs.

"What is the matter, Mademoiselle?" he gasped.

"The Signor has fainted. I am afraid he is dying," cried Felice, distractedly. "Run for the priest and the doctor! Quick, Angelico! There's not a moment to lose! Run for your very life!"

Felice, poor girl, was trembling like a leaf. She tried to arouse the poor man but alas! it was useless. Father O'Brien and Dr. McCabe arrived in a few minutes and lifted the dying man to the couch.

"Is there any danger to life, Doctor?" asked

the good priest, somewhat nervously, after a few minutes.

"Yes. The poor fellow is in a serious condition," answered the doctor. "He has sustained a paralytic stroke—hemorrhage into the brain. See! his left arm is paralyzed!"

"Left arm paralyzed!" shrieked Felice. "Oh my God! The poor Signor—the poor Signor!" and she wept convulsively.

There was some talk, later, of taking him to the hospital, but Felice interposed. "If he must die, Father," she pleaded, "let it be here, where he has lived over forty years of his life—here, in this very room, surrounded on all sides by his books! Let it be here in the light of Beethoven's smile—here in the presence of his dear piano—his life's best friend, whose heartstrings even now wait for the noble, beckoning touch of his artist-fingers! I will stay with him until the end comes. He was a friend to me, Father, and I will be a friend to him, not only for my sake but also for the sake of Hortense." And all night long Felice watched and prayed at the death-bed of her friend and benefactor.

Three weeks had passed and, in the course of this time, Signor Bottini, to the surprise of everyone, had made great progress. Dr. McCabe was more than pleased and would say laughingly:

"Felice, it was your good nursing that saved him."

The Signor's return to consciousness was gradual and, now that his senses were perfectly restored, he conversed freely with his many pupils, who daily swarmed around his bedside to spend a few minutes with their dear old professor. Another month glided by. Signor Bottini was still very weak and had not yet left his bed. Surgeons and neurologists were called in—everything was tried to restore movement and sensation to his paralyzed arm. Rest, massage, electricity—all had so far proven useless and dame Rumor now had it that the Signor would never get the use of his arm—that he would never play the pipe-organ in old St. Patrick's again.

One afternoon the professor sent for the organist who was relieving him at the cathedral and who, was an ex-pupil of his, saying that he had something of importance to tell him. "You see, Richter," he began, when he arrived, "on Thursday of next week Father O'Brien will celebrate an anniversary Requiem for the repose of the soul of Mlle. Hortense Laporte and I would like to have the occasion marked with special music, for she was a faithful and staunch member of the choir. My new Requiem Mass has not yet been produced and I would like to have it sung on that day. Several months ago, just

before I took sick, they knew the Mass perfectly and one or two rehearsals this week with the full choir will be preparation quite sufficient."

"But, Bottini, it is impossible!" exclaimed Richter. "I have no one that is capable of taking the heavy soprano solo parts. Some of the passages are extremely difficult and they require a master-voice for their proper rendition."

"Never mind the soloist," thoughtfully answered the Signor. "She will not be found wanting when the proper time arrives."

CHAPTER III.

Father O'Brien and Signor Bottini were alone in the studio. The professor had just gone to confession and received. The morning was bright and rosy and, outside of the study window, a gay little robin was chirping its blithe and cheerful matin-song. The room was filled with the odor of roses and carnations, for, flowers were everywhere in evidence. The Signor loved them and his pupils knew it and every morning brought a fresh quota of the choicest blossoms from the down-town conservatories. The little robin outside was soon joined by his mate and together they now held forth in love's sweet serenade.

"Listen to the robins, Father!" at last broke forth Bottini. "There is a simplicity in their song that makes it all the more beautiful. They carol forth the music of hope—

"And hope like the rainbow of summer,
Gives a promise of Lethe at last."

"Sing on, O birds! I love your voices. You bring me the joy and the peace of a happy heart and your song teems with the freshness and purity of rich mountain air."

There was a faint tap at the door and in walked Felice and, with her there came a goodly amount of sunshine. She looked beautiful as she stood in the doorway—the crisp morning air had brought the color to her cheeks.

"Good morning, Father O'Brien! You are an early caller. What do you think of my patient?" and Felice smiled sweetly and a ripple of girlish laughter burst from her bright, ruby-red lips.

"Felice, you are a capital nurse," replied the priest, good naturedly. "In fact, I would not hesitate placing myself under your care—providing you did the nursing and I all the bossing." Then he laughed a hearty laugh that was contagious, for even Bottini himself could not resist.

"I suppose, Signor, you were wondering what had happened me," Felice began, addressing Bottini. "Well, this morning you were fast asleep and I glided out silently, with my music roll, over to mother's. She had not heard my voice in many weeks and I was going to give her a concert, all to herself—poor thing! I sang the Jewel Song from Faust, Gounod's Ave Maria and my solo parts in your new Mass for the dead. Mother was simply delighted with my progress and you don't know how her face brightened when I sang. But, when she spoke of Hortense,

her voice trembled and there was a hint of sorrow in it."

"But, come Felice!" suddenly broke in Father O'Brien, "will you not sing a bit for me, this morning? I have not heard you for a year past." The good priest was very sympathetic and he was afraid that if the conversation were to go on thus, he could not help but give vent to his feelings. "Come," he added, "sing me Gounod's Ave Maria!"

Felice seated herself at the piano and sang the selection beautifully, with all becoming dignity and grace. The priest listened eagerly—so did the noble Signor but alas! the latter's thoughts were elsewhere. Before him, there loomed a picture of Hortense in the old choir loft. He, himself, was at the organ; below, several thousand people were listening eagerly to that self-same Ave Maria, their heads bowed down in prayer. Father O'Brien was at the altar—and all this alas! seemed but yesterday.

"Well done, child!" lovingly said the priest, as Felice rose and left the piano. "It was a capital and faultless rendition and I compliment you."

Signor Bottini raised his head. There was a distant, far-away look in his eyes and he seemed to have suddenly awakened from a dream.

"Signor!" asked the priest, "How long be-

fore your protegee, here, takes her place in the choir? Her voice is nigh perfect now, methinks."

"Before very long—before very long," answered Bottini, somewhat distractedly. Felice and Father O'Brien exchanged smiles but on the old professor's face was written a deep and peculiar mystery.

The afternoon passed quietly and evening came with its dark, heavy shadows and hours of peace. The cathedral clock had just struck the hour of eight, when Felice rose from the table and approached the professor's couch and said: "Signor, I will now run over to church and go to confession, before the crowd comes. Mother and I will both receive tomorrow. It is the anniversary of poor Hortense's death and Father O'Brien will sing a Solemn Requiem Mass for her."

"But stay, child, stay for a few minutes longer! I have something to tell you—something to ask you before you go," interrupted Bottini.

Felice drew nearer. Her face was pale and she felt as if her heart had suddenly stopped beating. Signor Bottini raised himself slowly on his couch. A weird look stole into his blood-shot eyes and he began nervously: "Felice, the time has come and I am going to reveal to you the secret that lies hidden in my heart. No

ears have heard and none shall hear but thine. Would to God that I could preside at the organ to-morrow, I would play as I never played before, for the sake of Hortense—innocent, white dove! I see you are surprised and I may tell you now that I loved Hortense—loved her with all the tenderness of my poor heart and yet she never knew, for I never told her."

"Loved Hortense my—sister?" interrupted Felice almost wildly. "Is it possible?"

"Possible? Yes, Felice," he went on, "And listen—to-morrow morning, my new Requiem Mass is to be sung in dear old St. Patrick's for the first time. Herr Richter has held rehearsals with the choir during the week. I promised that I would supply the soloist for the occasion and, Felice, I am going to ask you to take your place in the choir, to-morrow morning, for the first time, to sing the solo parts of my new Mass."

Felice drew back like a startled dove. "To sing to-morrow, when the memory of Hortense will be so fresh, within my heart? How can I—why do you ask?"

"I ask, Felice, because I wrote that Requiem in honor of Hortense and dreamed, one day in the past, that it would be sung on the anniversary of her death. I cannot go because my arm is paralyzed. Everything is ready and you, alone, are capable of singing the soprano solo

parts. If you say no, Felice, the new Mass cannot go on. Will you go, Felice?"

Felice stood speechless and her eyes seemed to be gazing far over the misty horizon of the past. She waited an instant and the tears were gathering in her eyes. Then a determined look crept into her pale, white face and she said: "Yes, noble Signor! for your sake and for Hortense's sake, I will go."

CHAPTER IV.

The pearly gates of the morning opened and ushered in a perfect day. Signor Bottini turned nervously on his couch and a look of sadness came into his eyes. He had been sitting up in his easy chair every afternoon for the past two weeks and Dr. McCabe reversed matters a little now and told Felice that the professor might sit up in the morning if he wished. This came as a blessing to the Signor. "Put my chair close up to the window this morning," he said to Felice, "so that I will be able to hear the singing and the music. And, Felice, when you go to church, tell the sexton to open the large window in the choir loft so that I will be able to hear it all the better."

When Felice was ready to go, the professor took her hand in his and said: "Felice, my child, now do your best. Remember that Hor-tense in heaven is listening."

The church bells had ceased ringing and now came the sounds of the organ—heaving and mighty as the ocean. Bottini trembled and looked at his paralyzed arm. Then tears came to him and he bowed his head and remained in

this attitude for some time. The Requiem Aeternam and Kyrie had been sung and Signor Bottini had heard every word. Then he raised his eyes to heaven and his lips moved in prayer. Out upon the air, again, came the swelling notes of the great organ. A noble chorus of male voices reverently answered the chant of Father O'Brien, at the altar. Then there was a pause until the clear, diapason notes played the beautiful prelude to the Dies Irae. Signor Bottini raised himself and listened eagerly. Felice was singing and the words floated out upon the wings of the morning, clear and distinct:

"Dies Irae, dies illa
Solvat saeculum in favilla,
Teste David cum Sibylla.
Quantus tremor est futurus
Quando Judex est venturus,
Cuncta stricte discussurus!"

Low and sweet was the air at first, rising and falling till the mighty, roaring, voluminous voice filled every nook of that imposing edifice. There were no grand-opera trills and triplets, no fairy-like cadenzas in the selection. It was nothing but a grand, simple, pleading, touching air—one that came from the heart; one that went directly to the heart. A look of satisfaction crept into the Signor's wearied face when Felice had finished. Then the full choir of sixty voices took

up the strain. It was full of power and majesty and Bottini could hardly sit it out. His face twitched; he became restless and he moved around nervously in his chair. He could stand it no longer.

"I must go! I must," he gasped, as he rose from his chair and threw his heavy cloak about him. "I feel that God is urging me to go—" and he opened the door and made for the stairs. He felt weak but the thought of what he was about to do seemed to bring surplus strength to his body.

When Bottini reached the church door he was panting for breath. "I must! I must!" he still gasped, as he entered the church and made for the steps that led to the gallery. The *Dies Irae* was still being sung, and now came the last few sentences, in a faint, trembling voice:

"Pie Jesu Domine,
Dona eis requiem!"

When the Amen was sung, Signor Bottini staggered into the gallery and made for the organ. His breath came in interruptions. He whispered something to Herr Richter, then turned and faced Felice and smiled gently. In a moment Bottini himself was at the organ, playing most beautifully—playing as he had never played before. His paralyzed arm hung helpless at his side—his right hand was on the keyboard. Herr

Richter had charge of the stops. The Signor looked strong and every one in that vast cathedral seemed to recognize the strange power that swayed the keys and pedals of the organ. Now he was playing a delicate, distant-sounding aria—it was so sweet, so clear and tender and it seemed as if the heavens had suddenly opened and an angel was singing a song of peace and joy to the silent, praying multitude below. Then came the voice of the officiating priest and Bottini sent back answer from the organ.

The Sanctus and Agnus Dei of the new Mass were beautifully rendered, and then followed the Libera. This was, without a doubt, the heaviest part of the composition, and during its rendition, Signor Bottini's strength at the organ gave way. Herr Richter begged to replace him, but the Signor only shook his head, smiled gently and then played on.

The last notes of the Libera had just died away when Father O'Brien raised the censer several times and sang:

"Requiem aeternam, dona ei, Domine!"

Signor Bottini raised his eyes to heaven imploringly and played, as the choir answered:

"Et lux perpetua luceat ei."

His face was of a deathly, ashen hue and on

his forehead several large beads of perspiration were shining. Again the priest chanted:

"Requiescat in pace!"

But the choir did not sing the response. There was only a shrill, sharp cry. It was the cry of a woman and several men sprang forward just as the noble Signor's head fell on the organ. They lifted him back. His wrist was pulseless and, on his face, there was the expression of a smile. Within dear old St. Patrick's all was regret and sorrow, but within the soul of Signor Francesco Bottini, heaven's brightest sunbeams of peace, and happiness eternal were just then shining.

ONE EASTER AT HIGHMORE.

CHAPTER I.

On a cold October morning in the early eighties, the humble little rectory at Highmore held two happy hearts. The final, decisive words that made Kenneth Cameron and Cecile Emery man and wife had just been spoken, and in the eyes of good old Father Francis—God rest his soul—there lurked a look of intense joy. Often in the twilight, he had knelt before the altar holding sweet converse with his God, asking blessings for his children of the parish, and Cecile's name was never forgotten. Often he wondered whether she would really marry Cameron. He was rich, but what after all were riches, when the man she loved possessed not even the priceless pearl of faith?

Kenneth Cameron was a man about thirty-five, well preserved and quite good looking, and in his open, frank countenance there was a look of strong determination. His father had been a minister in a little village surrounded by Scottish hills, and shepherds who tended their flocks on the hills were his parishoners. He was a good,

honest, old soul, and when Kenneth, his only child, kissed him good-bye years ago and left Scotland to make a fortune in other lands, his heart nearly broke. Kenneth came right to Highmore; he was poor then, but he had pluck, back-bone and endurance; and thus, in a few years, he had made and saved quite a fortune. Now, he was the wealthiest man in the city, and his marriage to pretty Cecile Emery—the brightest rose in all the country-side—was just, at this moment, the general topic of the hour. Cecile Emery came of good, sound Catholic stock, was quite accomplished, and in every way suited to become the wife of Highmore's wealthy broker.

"May God bless you both!", Father Francis said thoughtfully, as they were about to leave the rectory. "And remember your promise, Kenneth! You have plucked the fairest flower in all my parish and I hope that bitter sorrows may never mar or blight its beauty—good-bye!" And he shook hands with both of them vigorously and closed the door. When they were gone, Father Francis sank down before a statue of the Blessed Lady and prayed that the man, whom he had just made happy, might not be lost, and some day would receive the gift of faith. Cecile was a saint of earth, he thought, and surely her pure, Christian character would do much to this end. Words and exhortations had been use-

less. They had fallen on barren, hard rocks. Cecile had married the man she loved; she was happy, but, in all her joy, there was the undertone of a regret, and she dreamed of the future and wondered in her soul if her dream would ever come true.

For days and days Father Francis' words rang in Kenneth's ears. "Remember your promise!" the strange, mystic voices said, and he could not hush them. Perhaps, in some far-off day these self-same voices would remind him of his sacred pledge. Let us hope that, when they did speak, he heard them!

Thirteen years had passed. The Camerons were still counted the wealthiest family in Highmore, and, to outward appearances, really deserved the distinction. Kenneth had changed little in these years, and Clyde, his young son, now ten years old, was the dead picture of him. Cecile had changed much in looks. One would hardly have known her, with her trouble, sad face. The years were weaving light silver strands through her hair, and no one in all Highmore but herself knew the reason. Kenneth had been a traitor to the promise he had made to Father Francis years ago, and this was the strange power that made her so unhappy. The fires of bigotry that had been burning in Kenneth's soul, lit up in all their virulence, one

morning after breakfast. The baby was a month old and had not yet been baptized, and Cecile's suffering, mother-heart was bleeding with anguish.

"Don't you think it is time baby was being baptized, Kenneth?" she asked, gladly.

"Baby baptized?" he interrupted hotly. "Cecile, are you going mad? Baby baptized—well hardly! That boy will go to his father's church, so you can put all your little scruples aside," he added, sarcastically.

The color in Cecile's cheeks reddened, and for the moment she was stunned. She thought that she had known Kenneth, but now, alas! she divined in him another man. After a few minutes, she was quite composed and said, in a trembling voice. "But your promise, Kenneth! Have you forgotten how you promised Father Francis that if any children should be born to us, they were to be baptized and raised Catholics. Have you forgotten so soon? It pains me deeply."

"Promises count for nothing," he stammered forth scornfully. "I never for one moment, intended to do it, anyway—and, pahaw! the priest is dead."

"The priest is dead, 'tis true, and more's the pity," added Cecile sadly. "But, Kenneth, there were other ears than his that heard the

promise. There is a God in heaven, and He understood and I am glad that there is One who remembers your words still."

"Enough of this nonsense—this old-woman talk!" shouted Cameron madly, and there was a look of deep scorn in his eyes. "My child will never—never, I say—be baptized by a priest," and he stormed out of the room in a great fit of anger.

During the years that followed, Cecile had never again, except on a few, thoughtless occasions, mentioned baptism or anything pertaining to Clyde's condition, and, when she had done so, it ended in bitter quarrels and strifes. Often she felt as if her heart would break, but she was afraid, and sealed her lips for the sake of her child—for peace, after all, was very sweet. One day, Clyde came running to his mother with a face, pale and frightened, and exclaimed: "Mother, poor Tim Flannagan, next door, has just died. I was at his bedside when the end came, and he beckoned me with his little, pale fingers, and then kissed me good-bye. But, oh mother, he had such a nice death, and the priest from the Cathedral prayed with poor Tim all morning. Poor Tim! how I will miss him! He was about the only boy I ever knew, and—and—I—" Clyde could not speak another word, for the deathbed scene he had just wit-

nessed, had made him think of too many things and he burst into tears, and the kindly ring of his mother's voice could not assuage the pain of his little, wounded heart.

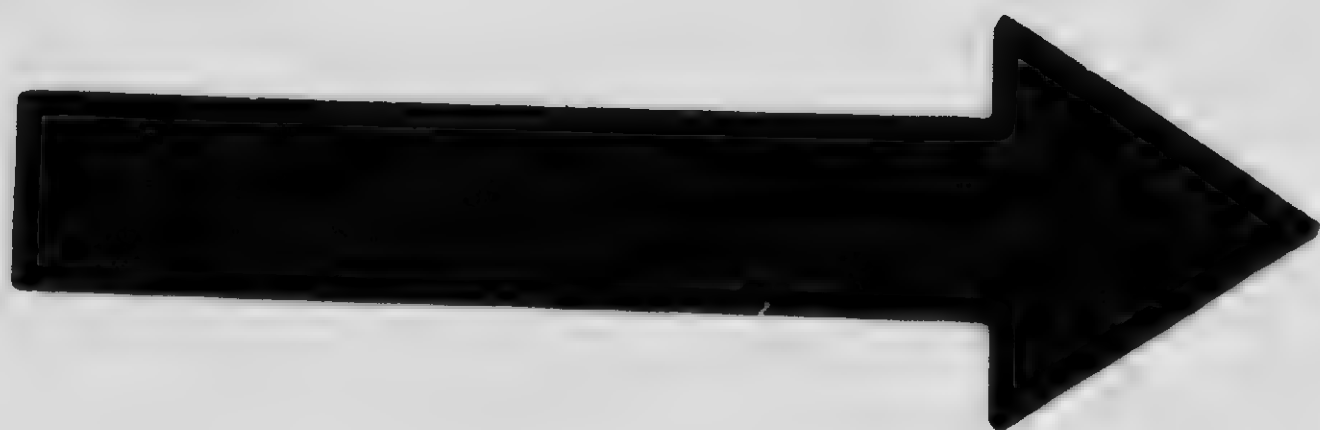
After some time Clyde's little rain of tears was over, but the feelings of deep sorrow still penetrated his soul, for he realized that he had lost the first little friend of his heart's kingdom, and that for years to come there would be an empty place nothing could fill.

CHAPTER II.

On the evening before Tim's funeral, the Camerons were seated in their cosy drawing room when Mr. Cameron suddenly rose, after consulting his watch, and exclaimed: "By jove, Cecile! I almost forgot. It is past seven, and I should have been at the office long ago, fixing up my monthly statement."

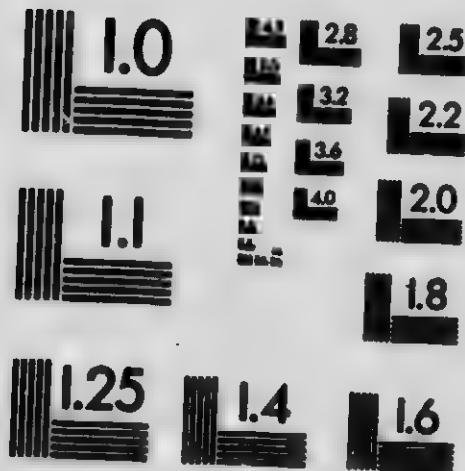
"Since you will be away then for some time," interposed Mrs. Cameron, "Clyde and I will take a run over to Flannagan's. Clyde so wishes to see poor little Tim before he is taken away." Cecile's cheeks burned; she would have liked to have taken Clyde to church with her in the morning, but she was afraid lest her husband might enact another scene in their household drama. The very mention of it would bring forth such a volley of abusive, sarcastic words that Cecile once more smothered those feelings that her honest heart had known so well.

When Clyde and his mother returned from the Flannagan's, neither spoke. Their hearts were too full for utterance. Clyde was sitting in a rocker before the fire place, running his fingers carelessly through an open book, while



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his mother's lips moved silently and her fingers counted pearly beads that lay hid in the handkerchief on her lap.

Presently Clyde broke out tenderly: "Mother, why won't you let me go to the Sisters' school, so that when I am sick they will come to me and pray for me, like they did at Tim's sick bed? I am not like other boys at all, and I just hate my old tutor. He never mentions God's name to me and it all seems so strange, and now I am nearly eleven years old—and, oh! how I do wish I could say half the prayers that those children do. And, mother, I would like to go to your church on Sundays and do just what you do and learn to pray to Mary, like Tim used to do. Even if father does get angry, I don't care—I want to be just like Tim

There was a momentary pause. "Never mind my boy, my prayer, I am sure will some day be answered," she said, "and then everything will be all right."

"But I want to learn how to pray, now," he interrupted. "That some day may be too late for me, mother. I want to be one of Mary's children, like Tim, and when I know how to pray, I will have much to ask for."

The clock struck eleven. "Come, Clyde" Mrs. Cameron said, sweetly, "it is time you were in bed." When the child was ready to retire, he

came to his mother, climbed on her knees, and whispered into her ears: "The prayers, mother! teach me your "Our Father," and that "Hail, Mary," to-night! I am sure poor Tim needs a prayer. Let my first one be for him."

Mrs. Cameron kissed the little red lips and then went to the boy's room closed the door gently and said in a trembling voice: "Remember, Clyde! that your father hears nothing of this. Come, let us kneel down together."

The moonbeams stole through the fine lace curtains and threw their light upon Clyde's golden, curly hair, as he blessed himself and repeated, word after word, the "Our Father."

Just then the front door opened and in walked Mr. Cameron. The house was unusually quiet, and thinking Cecile and Clyde were fast asleep, he took off his overcoat and tip-toed into the drawing room, so as not to disturb their slumbers.

That very moment the voice of a child came ringing across the hallway—it was sweet and tender, just like the first song of a young bird in spring—and the words stole into the drawing room, reverently and distinctly: "And lead us not—into temptation—but deliver us from evil—amen. There was only a momentary silence

—a slight pause and the two began again: "Hail, Mary, full of grace—"

Kenneth Cameron stood still for a moment, a dark shadow crept into his pale face; his teeth were set and there was a wild look in his eyes, as he tip-toed across the hall and then stood at the door of Clyde's room. It was partly closed, and there, in the corner, he saw all. There was Clyde in his white robe, and beside him knelt Cecile, and his boy was being taught how to chatter "papist" prayers. Was it possible? The fires of a fierce hatred were consuming Cameron's soul. His muscles twitched; he could hardly stand it out. Out upon the silence again came the voice of the child,—*"Holy Mary—Mother of God—pray for us sinners—"* The excited man bit his lips in anger. "Oh, I cannot stand it," he thought, "the idea of teaching my boy to pray to a woman! I will yet bend Cecile's haughty will and she will yet have to cower down in the dust at my feet and beg my pardon." A thousand thoughts flashed through his mind. Now came the sweet voices of mother and child. They were making the sign of the cross—"In the name of the Father—and of the Son—" Kenneth Cameron thought of his promise to poor Father Francis, thirteen years ago, and again he brushed it away carelessly. The battle was on. It had reached the climax. He could

not stay the wild impulses of his haughty nature—his face was the picture of a madman's, and in he darted, into the very room where mother and child were kneeling, and roughly snatched the little one from the floor, amid a cry of curses that would have put to shame even Lucifer himself.

"Cecile Emery," he groaned, "let this night put an end to all your foolish fancies! That boy will never be a Catholic and mumble monotonous prayers and bend his knee to the priest, and if you persist in making my life uncomfortable I will tear your heart in two. You do not deserve my love and you are degraded in my eyes for having planned and schemed and plotted against me and my child when my back was turned. By heaven, I swear! you shall yet suffer for this!" Clyde stood transfixed—a witness to another act of high society drama—and in his eyes the tears gathered fast.

Mrs. Cameron knelt at the bedside. Her eyes were dry, and her hands held fast her throbbing temples.

"Cecile," he shrieked, "do you hear me with your mumbling witchery of prayer? Remember, this night ends your trickery with that child!" and he stormed out of their sight and paced the hall with the fury of a caged lion.

When he was gone, Clyde stole over to his

mother's side, put his trembling, childish arms around her neck, and planted a kiss on her feverish cheeks. Then in the moonlight, he knelt down again beside her and, I really believe, his lips moved in prayer.

CHAPTER III.

Two months had passed and the Cameron house was bright and cheerful as ever. Kenneth seemed to have forgotten all about the fatal night, and Cecile tried very hard to forget. Every day she made a visit to St. Peter's and God only knows what her thoughts were.

One day, early in February, when steel-gray skies were dull and cheerless, Cecile stood at her window, gazing down the long, empty, desolate street. It had just begun snowing a little and the streets were very slippery. She had sent Clyde with a message to the grocer's, and he had not returned, though he had been gone a full hour. Just then, the ambulance swept around the corner, and for an instant a mighty fear swayed her inmost feelings. The ambulance halted before her very doors. She felt dizzy; everything was moving around her and she came near falling to the floor, but she held fast to a chair standing near by. She stared through the window almost wildly; she saw her husband, and then came the ambulance surgeons carrying an almost lifeless, pale body on a stretcher. The door opened, she stared at the men; she could

not speak; she stared at the being on the stretcher—it was the body of a child. She threw her hands into the air and shrieked. "My God! it is Clyde—" she moaned, as she sank into Kenneth's strong arms.

Another of the many accidents that take place in our large cities had occurred, and again, as usual, the unhappy victim was a poor, little, unsuspecting child. Clyde, on his way home, tried to hurry over the King street crossing just as a west-bound car was coming up a number of yards behind him. The streets had just frozen hard after a thaw, and the poor lad slipped and fell with the back of his head upon one of the iron rails. It was an awful fall; the child was dazed and uttered a sickly cry. A policeman saw the child falling and made for the crossing. The motorman also saw the boy lying there, and tried to stop the car; it was going at a slow speed, thank God! Clyde's body would have been crushed under the wheels had not the policeman's strong arms just then been active. The child was in a state of collapse, and restoratives were administered, until the ambulance arrived that was to convey the little sufferer to his home.

All next day Clyde lay in his little cot, to all appearances dead. His breathing was shallow; his little pulse almost imperceptible. Not a word

had yet passed his lips, and he seemed to be in a continual stupor. Dr. Von Hartmann the eminent specialist, had been called into the Cameron house, several days after, by the family physician, and upon examining the child, the famous German professor at once said: "My dear people, I am very sorry, the child will die; its chances to live are very meagre. The symptoms at first were those of concussion of the brain, but during the last twenty four hours meningitis has set in, and this makes the prognosis so unfavorable. I have seen quite a few traumatic cases and, out of their number, only two recovered."

Mrs. Cameron was almost wild; the excitement had been too much for her. If Clyde would only speak how much better she would feel, and then to think that her only child had to die—and to die unbaptized. O horrible thought! The agony of it sickened her deeply, but she bore up bravely and found a consolation in prayer. Three weeks had passed and Clyde's condition had not changed much, although Dr. Von Hartmann seemed more hopeful. She however, resolved to make a novena to the Mother of God, and one morning she placed a little, white, marble statue of the Virgin at Clyde's bedside. Before this, a candle was to burn all day and night. She cared not what Kenneth would say, but she expected a few words of reproach

from him that afternoon. But strange to say, he saw the statue and burning candle and not a word passed his lips, and Cecile was glad, for she felt that his cold, icy heart was beginning to thaw. Perhaps the sight of the sick child had put a check on his tongue, so as not to desecrate the serenity of the sick chamber.

One evening, shortly after the lights were turned low, Mr and Mrs. Cameron watched at the bed of their sick child. Clyde moved around nervously on his pillow, his soft blue eyes opened, and for a moment he gazed into the two tear-stained faces over him; then his lips moved, for the first time since the accident, and he whispered:

"Hail, Mary, full of grace—." Again, he raised his fingers to his forehead, as if to bless himself, and a stupid, faraway look came to his face, and his hand fell down helpless at his side. Cecile wept bitterly, and upon Kenneth's troubled face there was a look, as if a storm were brewing within his soul.

The days wore on, and dark, cheerless days they were, but they were getting somewhat brighter. Clyde seemed more himself; he was less drowsy and tried to speak with great fervor, but then, almost as suddenly, his mind would become a blank. Yet, all in all, the doctors were well pleased with his condition. Day by day his

power of speech grew stronger, and he would converse quite freely with those around him. Not one moment was he free from pain, and, when his temperature ran up and wild, fever tempests consumed his energy, then he would sink into a low, muttering delirium, and often, very often, raise his fingers to his forehead, and there they remained until tired and exhausted he fell asleep.

One afternoon, when he awoke out of a refreshing sleep, he motioned his father to his bedside, and said, in a slow, weak voice: "Father, I am not going to get better, and I am going to ask you one favor before I die. It is the last I will ever ask of you," and he halted as if to catch his breath.

"Go on, my dear," said Mr. Cameron.

"I would like to have Father Doyle come to see me," the child continued, "so that he could speak to me the way he spoke to poor Tim one afternoon when I was there. He has such a warm heart, and he will make me very happy. Will you go for him, Father?"

"Yes, my child, I will have him come" he answered.

"I wish, father, that you yourself would go for him," Clyde interrupted.

Kenneth Cameron's eyes opened widely: he waited an instant, then he said nervously, "I will, my boy!" Cecile overheard the conversa-

tion, and in her soul a fresh, new light was just then shining.

Good old Father Doyle—he of the gentle face and snow-white hair—came daily to see Clyde, and stayed long hours to speak and read to him. After one of these visits, Clyde said to his father; “I don’t know, but every time I see Father Doyle coming in the doorway, my heart gives a jump, and all the pains in my back leave me just as rapidly as they came. His kind voice and his gentle smile do more for me than Doctor Von Hartmann does with electricity and drugs. And, oh, father, I am so happy, for I am getting to be more like Tim Flannagan every day” —and he smiled gently. It was the first smile Mrs. Cameron had seen on Clyde’s face all during his illness, and that smile lit up the darkness and the gloom of all her succeeding days.

A great change was also coming over Kenneth. He had taken off the mask of his other self, and in Cecile’s eyes was again the upright, manly heart and ardent lover of those early years. One day the little tallow candle on the table in front of the Virgin’s statue went out, and to Cecile’s great surprise, Kenneth himself lit it. And with that same match the Virgin, herself, lit the fires of faith and understanding that were smouldering in his soul, while the embers of his former vague, religious persuasions were turning cold in death.

CHAPTER IV.

It wanted but two weeks of Easter, and Highmore, with its rich avenues of spruce trees, was beginning to look its prettiest. The lawns were changing to green in the sunlight, the birds were returning in flocks, and flowers were everywhere beginning to push their heads through the wet earth. April's coming had been very welcome, and still he lingered, breathing fresh life into valley and meadow, and, from his golden c'ase, wreathed with the buds and blossoms of spring, he poured forth fresh, cooling showers. It was a grand awakening, and it spoke to Kenneth Cameron's soul more deeply and more clearly than words or actions had ever done. He, too, felt an awakening, but it was an awakening of the soul—an awakening, profound and majestic. He was beginning to think of eternal springs and eternal sunshines, and he stood at the gates of the dreaded Dawn, no longer the doubter and scoffer, but the believer, ready to pass out into the perfect day of prophetic faith—a day filled with joy and love and peace.

Mrs. Cameron was also breathing easier, for Dr. Von Hartmann had expressed every hope of

Clyde's recovery. The pains had left his back, the temperature was down to normal, his mental faculties were perfectly restored, and the only remnant of the old disease was a slight headache, that he experienced at times. But the poor child was only a shadow of his former self, yet mother and father were both overjoyed to know that God had spared their little one. Clyde grew stronger daily and was now sitting up in bed, and, when Dr. Von Hartmann promised the lad a drive with his father on Easter Sunday, the acme of childish happiness was reached.

One evening just as Mr. Cameron was going out the front door, his wife called him back: "Kenneth, are you going out again? My! we haven't had you home with us one evening since the middle of March, and this seems so strange, for you never went out much before. Kenneth, I am beginning to have strange misgivings."

"Calm yourself, Cecile!" he answered smilingly. "You see I am so busy, and I have come home so often during the day since Clyde's illness, that my work is never finished. I am, just now, balancing accounts and soon, my dear, I will be able to hand you the receipts." "To hand me the receipts," Cecile thought. "What did he mean? Had he been in financial straits that she knew nothing of?"

Cameron, in parting, only smiled, and I won-

der if Cecile noticed the merry twinkle in his eyes. No, he had not been in financial straits, but his soul had experienced spiritual difficulties that his wife knew nothing of, and he thought of settling a debt, which he owed her. It all came about in this way:

One Sunday evening early in March Kenneth was out for a walk. A soft breeze came sweeping up from the lake; it was so cool and refreshing. The streets were crowded with churchgoers and the pealing Cathedral chimes drew his footsteps in the direction of St. Peter's. For some time after, he stood at the Cathedral doorway, doubtful whether or not he should enter the sacred edifice. He had just turned his back on the church and was making for the pavement, when he felt a gentle touch at his elbow. He turned about nervously, and stood face to face with Father Doyle, the gray-haired rector.

"Ah! Mr. Cameron, it is delighted I am to see you," said the sweet voiced Father, gently. "Now, that you are here, won't you step inside a little this evening. The learned Archbishop is to speak, and there is a feast in store for the congregation." The chimes ceased ringing and the great organ pealed forth volumes of sound, as Father Doyle showed Mr. Cameron to a pew in front of the pulpit.

"Divine Providence again!" whispered the

priest to himself, as he entered the sanctuary.

That very evening Father Doyle had a caller at the rectory. It was Mr. Cameron. The Archbishop's sermon on Faith had set his brain thinking, and every truth in the eloquent discourse had taken deep root in Kenneth's soul. What passed between the two men that night only they themselves knew. But for evenings after you could see a dim light in Father Doyle's study at a certain hour, and the venerable old man, catechism in hand, instructing Highmore's wealthy broker. And now we can guess where Kenneth spent so many of his evenings.

Easter dawned, bright and rosy, with the ringing of bells over the roof-tops of the city. The heart of the morning beat joyous and free, and Clyde could hardly wait for his mother's return from early mass, for this was to be the day of his drive.

"Won't you have breakfast before going out driving, Kenneth?" asked Cecile lovingly. Kenneth shook his head and answered somewhat strangely: "Thank you, Cecile! I little feel like eating anything just now. After the drive, a morsel will taste all the better, my dear," and he laughed a bright, cherry laugh, that sent a thrill of joy through Cecile's heart.

When father and son were comfortably seated in the coupe and speeding down Central avenue,

Mr. Cameron turned to Clyde. There was a look of almost superhuman joy in his face, and he asked, in a trembling tone of voice: "Clyde, you have seen so much of Father Doyle—would you really like to become a Catholic?"

"With all my heart, father," came the answer, in a fine, soft, childish voice. "I often thought of it, but I dared not ask you."

"You may ask me now, Clyde," proceeded the father. "I have kept a little surprise from you and your mother. Last night I went to confession to good, old Father Doyle, and this morning I am to be baptized and receive Communion in the rectory chapel. And now, Clyde, you see, why I could not take breakfast this morning; it would have broken my fast. Little your mother dreams of the surprise that this Easter will bring her"—and he laughed gladly.

Clyde opened his large, blue eyes; he was almost dumb. He could hardly believe his father's words. "Oh, father!" he at last broke forth, amidst a flow of tears, "I am so happy. Can't I also be baptized with you? Do speak to Father Doyle. I am sure he won't refuse me."

They had to wait at the rectory some minutes. The housekeeper had told them that Father Doyle had just gone to the Cathedral for hosts, as the Archbishop was going to say his mass in his private chapel in the rectory.

Fifteen minutes later, both father and son had been baptized and received into the Church. The Archbishop, himself, kindly performed the ceremony, and, trembling old man that he was, he seemed still very active and strong for his years, as he mounted, with heavy step, the altar, to administer the first Holy Communion to Kenneth Cameron, while Clyde in his heart, thanked God that his first sweet prayer to Mary had been answered. Father Doyle was sponsor to both baptisms. After mass, the Archbishop blessed both father and son where they were kneeling, and went to the Cathedral to preach the Easter sermon. Mr. Cameron and Clyde occupied front pews, and as the venerable Archbishop spoke, large, heavy tears rolled down Kenneth's cheeks. He thought of the Archbishop's former sermon on Faith, and thanked God inwardly, for having directed his footsteps to old St. Peter's on that memorable Sunday evening.

When the coupe again stopped in front of the Cameron residence, the Archbishop was the first to alight, and he remarked thoughtfully. "You should have told your wife of this, Mr. Cameron. I dare say, she little suspects what has happened, but, after all, it will be a pleasant surprise for her, and a moment of happiness, the like of which she will not experience again."

"A moment of happiness, your Grace" added

Father Doyle, as he stepped to the pavement, "into which can be crowded all life's years of sorrow." Just then Kenneth Cameron's eyes lit up with a smile. He had seen Cecile's face through the lace curtains and his heart gave a wild thrill of joy.

The Archbishop himself took Clyde in his arms and lifted him from the carriage, and together they walked into the house. Mrs. Cameron's eyes sparkled as she knelt to kiss the Archbishop's ring. He had been a dear friend to the Emery's in the days gone by, and, as he stooped to bless Michael Emery's only child, his saintly old heart felt a pain that was akin to sorrow. "May all your days be filled with sunshine," he said, "and may God bless you and yours!" Just then a thought pierced Cecile's soul. She thought of Kenneth and wondered in her heart if her prayer would ever be answered. She raised herself from her knees and smiled to Father Doyle, as she clasped hands. Then turning to Kenneth and Clyde, she noticed a strange look in both their eyes, which spoke of a secret something she dreamed not of.

Kenneth rose to the situation and laid bare the secret, that up to now had been hidden in his heart. "Cecile," he exclaimed, with much feeling, "the accounts are balanced—the debt is paid. Here are the receipts," and he handed

her two souvenir documents. They bore the particulars and date of her husband's and son's baptism and entrance into the Church.

Cecile trembled and held the documents to her gaze. The tears were gathering in her soft eyelids. The surprise had totally upset her. "Oh, God!" she cried "I thank Thee!" And she kissed Kenneth and Clyde just where they were standing.

SHADOW AND SUNSHINE.

An hour ago, I walked through the Halls of Misery. About me were seas of pale, sick faces—some bearing a hopeful look, some down-cast and despairing, others, again, contracted by the ravages of pain. The little hospital clock in the far corner ticked away the minutes that weighed like lead upon some poor, tired souls, and all the air was heavy with rose-perfume. The long, white ward was silent, save for an occasional weak moan that came from the bed, near the last window, where a little light flickered peacefully. With aching heart, I drew near. Poor, degraded man! How my heart went out to him as he lay there, almost battered beyond recognition—another unhappy victim of the terrible accident in one of the down-town streets. His face had a hard look upon it, and as I drew near he gave me a hard smile that almost froze the blood in my veins. I took his hand and bent over him and spoke, but he made no answer. His glassy eyes only opened to close again. I felt that death had taken hold of his heart-strings, and that the end would only be a matter of a few minutes.

At the bedside knelt the sweet-faced nun, who

had not left him since his body had been carried in, early in the afternoon. Her eyes seemed to be treasuring visions other mortals dreamed not of, and her lips were tuned to the melody of prayer. Presently, she rose, and bending over the dying man, listened for a moment, then answered sweetly: "You must not speak so, poor man! You are not alone, for God Himself is near, willing to be your friend—"

"My friend?" faintly spoke up the dying man, and for an instant he lingered upon the music of that word, whose true meaning he had never realized until now. But it was too late.

Suddenly, a darkness crept into his wild eyes, a loud volley of curses fell from his lips—he cursed God, life, everybody—curses so horrible that the very air and rose leaves trembled and stirred the hearts of the many sleepless observers who moved uneasily in their white beds in the long ward. His fists clinched terribly, his whole body shook, and another awful curse died on his lips. And his soul passed out into a cold and desolate night, with no bright star to cheer its bitter journey.

The good, little nun stared a minute into the face, set cold in death. A few tears crept from her tired eyes; they rolled down her snowy guimpe, and I almost thought I heard them fall, so deep was the silence.

Then, turning to me, she whispered: "He is gone—poor man! God be mercifull!" and sadly she crept out of the long, white ward, sick at heart for the passing of an unrepenting soul. And instantly these beautiful lines came to me—"If we live truly, we shall see truly. It is as easy for the strong man to be strong, as it is for the weak to be weak. When we have new perception, we shall gladly disburden the memory of its hoarded treasures as old rubbish. When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn."

I paused a moment in the presence of death, and again my heart ached, for it had been witness to many such scenes. Presently, the sound of a little silver bell floated outside, down the long corridor. It grew louder and louder, as it drew nearer, and in another minute the old gray haired chaplain passed in the light of a burning candle, which the good Sister carried reverently. Another soul was hovering on the brink of eternity; another life had almost spent its fires in the mighty battle of existence. It was passing from the Now into the Then.

The music of the little bell fell upon my heart, and eagerly I followed—followed the little bell and the pale, flickering candle-light. Upon a spotless pillow, lay the sickened, tired head of

the dying woman. She was quite young—on her cheeks still lingered the flush of the last twilight, that had shone through the large open windows. Yes, the twilight of her life was over, and now the night was waiting with her glorious hours of rest, sacred and satisfying. But she feared not, for Christ—the Pilot of her soul—was about to come to her to steer her little barque into the blessed tide of Peace, that flowed beneath the sunshines of angels' smiles through a land of roses, where Joy and Love walked arm in arm through asphodelian meadows, and God Himself sat reigning in His heaven.

Heaven would soon be hers. Her years had been one continual shower of prayer and song. Other lives were the richer for her having lived, and as she lay there, one could almost see the fingers of the Master stealing, in the silence, to pluck from His garden one of life's purest flowers—a flower with its young life still before it—a flower with all its leafy hopes yet folded—a flower tended and watched and nourished by Himself and destined to bloom to loveliness beneath other skies.

Presently, the priest administered the Communion. His hands shook a little, and no wonder—for they held, in that brief moment, the mighty King of Heaven. The sick woman smiled. The priest had brought her soul's Pilot and she

wanted nothing more. And, for some time, all knelt in prayer. Only now and then, the sob of a strong man—the rear made one feel sad. It was the husband of the dying woman. But a year ago, the old chaplain had made the two, man and wife. The woman's eyes opened for a moment. "The prayers are so lovely," she said. "They float over the distant waters that divide us like the music of soft-toned reeds, and my Pilot and I are happier on account of them." Then, in trembling voice, she called: "The child! Jim! Where are they?"

The kind nun rose, bent for an instant over the white crib, and took from it a little blue-eyed babe; it had the face of an angel, and tenderly she placed it in the dying woman's arms. "Good-bye! Good-bye! my little one! Thou art pure as the snow, my little first-born—my Mary! God always, sooner or later, plucks a lily for the rose. You are my lily—my little, white-souled child, and I will not have to wait long till you rest safely in your mother's arms in heaven."

Unconsciously, almost, Bryant's lines came to me, and my lips repeated quietly:

"Innocent child and snow-white flower,
Well are ye paired in your opening hour;
Thus should the pure and the lovely meet,
Stainless with stainless and sweet with sweet.
White as those leaves fast blown apart
Are the folds of thy own young heart:
Guilty passion and cankering care
Never have left their traces there."

Gladly, the dying woman impressed a parting kiss on the tiny baby cheek. For a moment, she gazed at the little one. "O God!" she exclaimed, "willingly do I give up my life for the sake of my newborn babe—my Mary," and, trembling, she handed the precious charge into the arms the gentle, kind nun. Then, turning to her husband, she said with quivering lips: "Do not weep, Jim! I am so happy, and when I am gone I will not cease praying for you, my love. God is good, and I will ask Him to bring you and my little one home to me—soon." And while our lips moved slowly in prayer, her own followed anxiously, and when the end came—as it did peacefully and quietly—the happy mother, who had tasted the joys of motherhood and sacrifice, opened her eyes and had a smile for each of us. And, silently, her white soul went out to the Pilot, who stood waiting at the blessed foothills of Eternity, in a pleasant dawn, to steer it into the heavenly calms—"into the broad sunshine of the other life," as Longfellow so beautifully expresses it.

"Life is made up of strange pictures," the nun said to me, as we walked down the long corridors. "To-night, we, two, have witnessed the Autumn of despair and the Summer of hope; in one was the impression of the Evil One; in the other the noble spirituality of the divine Galilean, Himself.

One was the shadow, the other the sunshine; one brings a touch of pain, but the other a feeling of joy, for to have witnessed such a death is almost a glimpse of heaven itself."

And the humble, little nun was right.

FOR LOVE'S OWN SAKE.

CHAPTER I.

"The rose is fairest, when 'tis budding new,
The hope is brightest when it dawns from fears;
The rose is sweetest washed with morning dew
And love is loveliest when embalmed in tears."

Scott (Lady of the Lake, Canto IV.)

A cool breeze swept lightly through the drawing-room windows of the St. George mansion on Champlain street, and the twilight shadows were already creeping around the streets, when Beatrice St. George—a fair maid of twenty summers—rejoiced that the lonely day was nearly at an end, as she sat running her nimble fingers over the ivory keys of her new piano. She was an only child, and her father, the Hon. Harvey St. George fairly idolized her, and no wonder, for she was indeed an ideal picture of Canadian womanhood and, as she sat there in the dusk in her dress of silk, with its many tasty gatherings of ribbons and lace, one could not but admire her rare beauty. Beatrice had been rather gloomy all day, yet never before had she played Mendelssohn with so much expression as now. Her

very soul was in her music and the clear, ringing notes of the "Spring Song," stole into every corner of that magnificently furnished room, the air of which was redolent with the breath of fresh roses. And now she rose from the piano, a slender, though graceful figure—her mouth

"with steady sweetness set
And eyes conveying unaware,
The distant hint of some regret
That harbored there."

Slowly, she crossed the room to stir the fire, which was almost out, and then her eyes wandered to the picture of a woman, which hung in its deep gilt frame above the mantle-piece. Long she stood there, gazing into the beloved countenance of her poor, dead mother, and almost unconsciously she whispered to herself: "Poor, dear mother! would that you were with me now! O, my heart is heavy with its dregs of sorrow. Ten long years have passed since the night your fevered lips kissed me their last good-bye. O! how cruel it was that you were taken from me at a time when I needed your counsel most! But no, it was not cruel—no, I dare not speak thus. God knew what was best and happiness and peace will surely come to me again. O, mother, would that you were near to advise me now! I am sorely distressed. Father is bound to have me marry Count Albertini, an Italian nobleman,

and the thought of it nearly drives me mad. I do not, cannot, love him. He asks me to forsake my religion, your religion, mother, for wealth, distinction and an empty title, and, when I mention Francois Fortier's name, father drifts into a violent fit of anger. But I am resolved. I will never forsake the Catholic Church for a hundred Italian counts like Albertini. I will marry Francois Fortier—the man I love. He is only a poor book-keeper, mother, but he has a heart of gold. He has been very reckless of late and has not seen the inside of a Church for years, but I love him, and I will make a man of him. Poor mother! poor Francois—”

She could not speak another word. Her feelings got the better of her and she sank down upon the sofa near by, exhausted and powerless, and wept like a child. A few minutes later, she was on her feet again, and her face was as white as that of the carved ivory figure of the Madonna that stood upon the piano. With heavy heart she walked to the large open window, facing the busy, lighted streets, and as she stood there, her thoughts wrestled with a great and mighty problem. The city clock had just struck eight, and sadly she gazed out into the night, while the heart of the city was vibrant with life. The band was playing on the island near by and crowds of people were walking in that direction. Presently

it struck up the overture of Mascagni's famous opera, and, when the solo cornetist played the "Ave Maria," Beatrice listened with both ears. Oh, it was so beautiful; it just suited her present state of mind and the tears were again gathering under her soft eyelids. To her it sounded like the voice of some longing and desolate heart, telling forth its tale of sorrow into the darkness of night. It touched a tender chord in her heart and almost dreamingly, she whispered to the busy night winds:

"Oh, for that sweet, untroubled rest
That poets oft have sung!

The babe upon its mother's breast,
The bird upon its young.

The heart asleep without a pain,
When shall I know that sleep again?"

Just then, she felt a light tap on her shoulders. She turned her head nervously, somewhat frightened, and her father stood before her.

"Ah, Beatrice darling!" he began, as he kissed her cheeks tenderly. "Don't be frightened, it is only papa. Why, how tired and worn you look, dear! I suppose you were wondering what had happened me. And is it really nine o'clock? Well, I was so busy at the office this afternoon, closing a few bargains in real-estate and those blundering fellows held me fast until now. But Beatrice! Child! You look troubled. What has

happened? Your eyes are red—you were weeping, child! Come what is the matter, darling?" And, saying this, he sat down beside her.

"Nothing very much," answered Beatrice. "The band in the park yonder played some beautiful selections and, as I listened, my heart grew so lonesome. And then, too, I thought of mother! poor, dear mother! Oh how happy I would be, could I only hear her voice! Do you know father, that this is the anniversary of her death?" There was silence and the Hon. Harvey St. George gazed sorrowfully at the woman in oil above the mantel-piece, and, when Beatrice turned slightly, she saw that his eyes were filling up with tears.

"Come father," she said, "Constance awaits you for supper in the dining room. The bell sounded ten minutes ago." And together they rose and, arm in arm, left the drawing room.

The Hon. Harvey St. George was one of the leading real-estate dealers in the city, and was considered by some, as being very wealthy, while others again asserted that he was on the downward path—on his last legs, as the saying goes—and that before many moons the beautiful St. George mansion would be in the hands of his creditors. A man of very distinguished appearance, he moved in the best circles of society. His wife was a daughter of the late Senator Smith, and, three years after her marriage, she

became a convert to the Catholic faith. After her death, St. George made up his mind never to marry again. He was a large-hearted, good-natured sort of a fellow, and gave freely to the poor, but he had one great fault; he had an ungovernable, bad temper, and, when he made up his mind to do a thing, he generally did it. He loved his daughter almost too much, and, as her father, sought her obedience in all things. St. George, himself frequented no particular church. Mrs. St. George had been a good Catholic and Beatrice was also brought up in her mother's faith, and it had been a rare thing to hear a word of ridicule from St. George's lips. But now, in his flights of temper, he would say distressing and cutting things, that pierced Beatrice's very soul, but she always forgave him. The other member of the household was Constance Burke, the trusty old servant, who, ever since the night of Beatrice's mother's death, had made the St. George mansion her home. She was the best friend Beatrice had in all this world and, to her example and timely instructions, the girl owed in part, her strong grounding in character.

Silence reigned in the dining room. Beatrice was looking over the daily papers and her father was taking his supper rather quietly. Something was troubling him, and it left its shadow on his

handsome face. His brow was wrinkled and his eyes were set. Something was worrying him and Beatrice knew it. Just then, Constance opened the door and said: "Mr. St. George, the clerk has just brought the mail, and here, Beatrice, is a letter for you." With her back to Mr. St. George, the good-natured woman kissed the perfumed envelope and handed it to Beatrice, with a merry twinkle in her eyes.

"Thank you, Constance. From Francois! my Francois," whispered Beatrice to herself, as she quickly opened the letter. Then she closed it again; her face turned pale, and the letter with the odor of crushed violets fell to the floor. Nervously she snatched it up again, and read it, her hands shaking with fear—

Room 45, Hotel Lafayette.

(Sydenham Street.)

Monday Evening.

Dear Beatrice,

I could not resist writing you again. Your resolution came as a thunderbolt to me. Do reconsider the matter, Beatrice, for my sake, do! I ask once more. I love you, and will give you wealth, distinction and happiness, and a beautiful home in Naples, if you consent to become my wife. By doing this you will save your father from utter ruin. Think well! You may some day regret this hasty act.

Yours —

NICCOI A ALBERTINI.

Beatrice St George's face paled when she had finished the letter; she was seized with an almost superhuman dread of some impending calamity and the name of Niccola Albertini brought a new terror to her soul. Again this man, whom she hated so, had dared to thrust himself into her very existence. Only yesterday, she had written him a burning letter, that she could never become his wife—but without avail. "By doing this, you will save your father from utter ruin." What did he mean? Ah! these were the words that pained her deeply and, for a minute, she stared into space, almost wildly, the vessels in her temples throbbing visibly. Poor girl!

During all this time, St. George was eyeing his daughter critically, and a cynical smile stole round his eyes, as he exclaimed: "Why Beatrice, what has happened? The letter seems to have brought you distressing news. Let me read it, child!" Beatrice raised her drooping head and stared wildly at her father, and, rising, obeyed and handed him the Count's letter.

Mr. St. George threw himself back in his easy chair and, quickly, his eyes scanned the letter; then he raised his head, and the furrows on his face deepened. Beatrice could not sit it out; she rose and walked the floor with an impetuous tread, an expression of deep anguish in her girlish eyes. Her father watched her, as a cat watches

a mouse, and at last he exclaimed somewhat hoarsely:

"Well, Beatrice! What have you to say?"

The girl stood still and heaved a deep sigh and, raising her misty eyes to his, exclaimed almost abruptly: "Father! it is impossible. Utterly impossible! Why do you persist in this marriage with this man, whom I hate and can never love? I cannot give up Francois Fortier, for I love him with all my heart."

"And you prefer," he exclaimed angrily, "that low-bred fellow, that good-for-nothing scamp, to a wealthy and refined man like Count Albertini? For a girl of your bringing up, Beatrice, I must say, your taste is remarkable." Just then his foot came to the floor with a loud noise.

"Oh, father! How can you speak so of Francois? He may not have the wealth of an Albertini, but if the word gentleman has any meaning, father, then, he is a gentleman. I have known him all these years and many a time mother ran her fingers through his golden hair, when we, two, were playmates. But that was long ago. To-day he is the self-same fellow, a trifle careless, I know—but he can hardly be blamed for that. Left an orphan at eight, and adopted by a careless aunt, he gradually drifted away from God, and now—well, he is nothing. If I give him up now, he will go to utter ruin. But father,

I cannot do it. I love him and I will marry him; I will help him to save his soul and lead him back into the embrace of the Catholic faith, which his poor, dead parents loved so tenderly. Father! I have a duty to perform—the salvation of the soul of Francois Fortier."

"Francois Fortier, that miserable worm of the street, that regenerate Catholic, to be married to the daughter of the Hon. Harvey St. George—impossible! Curse him! Well, after all, this is what a father can expect for sending his daughter to a Convent for a liberal education; this, then, is the sort of rubbish, those pale-faced nuns instil into the hearts of their scholars. They make them idolize their very church—set their idolatrous faith above wealth, distinction, honor and fame. Oh, what folly!"

Beatrice, weak and despairing, sank down on the couch, near the fire place. There was a momentary silence and she began: "Father! How can you speak so insultingly of the good Sisters? How dare you stigmatize my faith, my mother's faith, your wife's faith, as idolatrous? Oh, father, it breaks my poor heart. You must be going mad. I prize my faith, and I am not ashamed to say it, above anything earthly—above wealth, distinction, honor and fame, and as long as I hold the power of speech, I will never sell my soul for the love of that scheming

Italian. To live with him would be to me but a lingering death. Oh, father! Be merciful to me and I will bless you all my life." And Beatrice wept bitterly.

A groan burst from St. George's lips; he wrung his hands, the color left his cheeks, and, rising from his chair, he walked over to where Beatrice was sitting and answered somewhat calmly, as his temper was gradually abating: "Beatrice, child, listen! I am a prisoner in the Count's hands. The letter reads, you see—"by doing this you will save your father from utter ruin." Again these words burned into Beatrice's very soul. She had forgotten them in the hasty discussion that had followed, but now again they stood, black and staring, before her tearful eyes.

"Beatrice," continued her father, "I have never told you anything concerning my business relations with Albertini, but now the hour has come, and your marriage is the only means of sparing me from the ignominy of disgrace. The Count holds a large mortgage, on all my possessions, which he will destroy if you consent to become his wife. I met him at the Hotel Lafayette this morning, and he told me that, if you refuse, I—I—the Hon. Harvey St. George—will be a pauper in the streets of the city, before to-morrow's sun has coursed the blue canopy to its western home. Will you then persist in your

answer and see your father publicly disgraced, before your very eyes? Think again, child, and I will await your answer on the morrow." And then Harvey St. George left the dining-room with the day's mail under his arm, while Beatrice buried her head in a silk cushion on the sofa and sobbed aloud in the extremity of her anguish.

Constance Burke soon knelt at her side whispering sweet and consoling words, and her kind voice and bright cheerful smile soon made Beatrice feel better.

"Oh, Constance, I came near forgetting. Will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly, dear," came the answer, clear and distinct, like a silver bell.

To-day is the anniversary of mother's death, and I must have a mass read for her in the morning. Go at once to Father Stanislaus, as it is getting late, and to-morrow morning we will go to confession!"

"Good-bye, Beatrice!"

"Good-bye, dear!" And in a minute Constance was gone.

Beatrice went to her room that night sadder than ever. She sank down on her knee in front of the large white statue of the Virgin, which her mother had given her on her tenth birthday, and wept and prayed convulsively. "O Queen of Mercy! be my stay in this darkened hour of

trial! I seek thy advice—what shall I do? Would that mother were only here! Poor, poor mother! And my poor Francois, what will become of him? I am helpless in my father's hands. Must I obey him, when my conscience says—no? But I will have to yield. I am sure of it—I feel it. O, my poor, poor Francois!”

At an early hour next morning Beatrice and Constance returned from Mass. They had both received the “Bread of Angels” and Beatrice was prepared to face the worst and yet she was happy as the birds, flying through the air. She had made her peace with God and she had nothing to fear.

That morning after breakfast, a stormy scene followed. St. George's temper grew violent. “Well, Beatrice,” he asked, coolly, “I await your answer. Will you, for your father's sake, consent to marry Count Albertini?”

“You have my decision, father,” came the answer, clear and distinct, and the girl's lips trembled. “I will not, cannot consent to become his wife.”

“Then, ungrateful girl!” he thundered out viciously, as he pounded his fist on the table, “do your worst! You are no longer a child of mine. Your disobedience and stubbornness has forced me to hate you with all the hatred of a once loving heart. Go, where you will—drift

away to the hospital or alms house, but never, never again look up to me as your father. In your direst extremity, expect not even a word of pity from me. I would not even spare you, ungrateful child, and give a single penny to save you from a pauper's grave. I swear it. Go marry your Francois! Go, go to your Catholic Church and see what she will do for you!"

The Hon. Harvey St. George left the table and paced the room, with the fury of a caged lion. Beatrice ran up to him and threw her arms about him and cried out in the fullness of her pure, young heart: "O, father! Spare me! Save me! Don't throw me out into the cold streets!"

"Go! Go! I know you not," he cried, as he ran out of the room.

Beatrice, powerless as an autumn leaf, fell to the floor, sobbing as if her young heart would break. There was a slight noise—the front door closed with a bang and, in an instant, the Hon. Harvey St. George was lost in the black, surging crowds, that filled Champlain street.

That afternoon, two deeply veiled women entered the humble little church, near the city park. They were Beatrice St. George and Constance Burke. They had left the beautiful St. George mansion—forever, and at Constance's invitation, Beatrice was now going to make her home with the Burkes."

CHAPTER II.

Francois Fortier sat on the balcony of the Hotel Frontenac, idly puffing away at his cigarette. It was the hour of four in the afternoon. His work at the office was finished, and he sat gazing down sadly into the street, busy with excitement. He was a man of fine appearance, and on his young face, there lurked a tender smile. His large, black eyes, bright and dancing with almost childish gladness, held a singular fascination and, on his broad and full forehead, there was not a wrinkle of care. His complexion was fair and healthy, and the cool north-wind had rouged his cheeks until they matched the brilliant hue of his red neck-tie. A few feet away sat a rather strange looking man, who eyed Francois almost continually. He was dressed in a rich black suit, and wore a heavy dark moustache and beard. A pair of deep colored glasses were fastened to his rather stubby nose. He was one of the latest arrivals at the Frontenac—a foreigner, in fact, they said—and, only a few hours since, Francois had met this strange man, downstairs whose card read:

Prof. Herman Von Klingfeld,
Director Theatre Royal.
20 Potsdam Place. Berlin, Germany.

Francois did not know that the distinguished visitor was so near until he heard his slight cough, and turning he greeted the Professor with a cheery "good afternoon" and motioned him to his side. The Professor obeyed and in a second began to talk vociferously.

"Well, this is a delightful afternoon," he went on. "This Canadian air makes me feel like a new man. This morning I called in to see Dr. Hutchinson, the renowned eye-specialist. You know I heard of this man away over in Germany and he made some wonderful cures. My eyesight had been failing rapidly for the past few months and I decided to give him a trial—and this is why I am here. The doctor intends operating in a few days and gives me great hopes."

"Ah!" exclaimed Fortier, as he lit another cigarette, "he is a great man, and he has a wonderful practice. If anybody can help you, then Hutchinson is the man to do it."

A cold wind was now blowing from the north, and the strange man in black rose and said: "Come, Fortier. It is getting rather chilly out here. Let us go in. Come to my room—it is right on this flat, and let us have a game of cards." And, when they reached the room, Von Klingfeld handed Francois a chair near the table, that stood facing the large, open window.

"Well, what shall it be, Professor, euchre or pedro?" questioned Francois.

"Neither," answered Von Klingfeld, "those are old maids' games. They go at five o'clock teas and the like, but then we only laugh at them over in Berlin. What say you to a game of poker?"

"Poker?" asked Francois, "well really, Professor, I don't know a great deal about the game, as I have played it so little. Let it be poker, then, but remember I am only a green-horn at the game." An eager smile lit up the German's face, as he shuffled the cards.

They had now been playing several hours and the air of the room was heavy with clouds of strong-smelling smoke. On the table stood several empty bottles of champagne; the bell-boy had evidently been kept busy running the stairs. There was a slight rap on the door.

"Come in!" shouted out Von Klingfeld.

"Ah, it is you Sims. Walk right in and make yourself miserable, partner!" chuckled he lustily.

"How do you do, Harry?"

"Hello, there, Francois."

"Won't you take a hand in the game?" asked the black-headed Professor. "No, thank you, Von Klingfeld," answered Harry Sims, "I will only look on."

Thirty minutes later Francois rose from the table, after he had counted up his winnings on the tally card, that lay at his elbow.

"And do you really want to go, Fortier?" mumbled forth Von Klingfeld, with the accent on the "really."

"I must, Professor. I must have a draught of fresh air. The smoke in here is so oppressive," answered Francois.

"Oh, it is not the fault of the smoke, young man. Ha ! ha ! You are anxious to leave me, now that fortune has favored you—or is it perhaps that some modern Venus is awaiting you in some part of the city ?"

There was a slight turn of sarcasm in this and Herr Von Klingfeld laughed vigorously, when he finished speaking.

Francois colored. His eyes had a look of anger in them, and for a moment he thought that he had recognized the voice of the strange man in black. He had heard it before—somewhere. He was sure of it. But no ! he must have been dreaming and, just as quickly as the thought had come to him, he banished it again.

"Well," Francois went on, "since you persist so, I will play a little longer. But, sir ! it was wrong of me to put my hand in this sort of a game at all. Go on ! shuffle the cards." And

again with a heavy sigh, Francois Fortier dealt the cards, while the strange man in black eyed him furtively.

Just as he finished, the bell-boy entered with a letter for Francois. Eagerly he opened the envelope and read it. It was a note from Beatrice St. George.

My Dear Francois,

Meet me to-night at 8 o'clock at the old church near the city park. I have something to tell you. This afternoon I bade farewell to my home on Champlain street. I am staying at Burke's. Dear old Constance is with me. Father has disowned me. May God bless you!

With love, your own

BEATRICE.

A merry smile stole round Francois' curved lips, and, in his happiness, he did not notice the searching look the strange man directed on the contents of that mysterious letter. A few words alone were readable:—"Your own Beatrice"—and they were plain as day and, when Von Klingfeld read the name, his eyes sparkled, the furrows on his forehead deepened, and a look of disappointment crept into his wild face.

"Pardon me, Von Klingfeld," began Francois, "for having kept you waiting. Whose play is it?" "Yours, partner," answered the uneasy Herr Von, from Berlin.

One hour passed. Two! three! four!

The German professor was in excellent spirits; he swore and laughed alternately. But not so with Francois Fortier. He, poor boy, was almost despairing, for his losses were heavy and the tell-tale was clearly stamped on his clean-shaven countenance. His face was even redder now than the tie that shone from underneath his coat. It seemed as if almost every drop of blood in his body had suddenly run to his head to stimulate his brain to activity. The hour had arrived and it was of vital moment to the lonely, troubled heart of poor Francois. What was he to do? All the money, which he had deposited in the bank—the hard-earned money, which some day was to make Beatrice happy—nearly all of it was drifting by degrees, into the greedy hands of this strange man in black. And what would Beatrice say? Oh! he could never return to her, almost penniless. The thought of it nearly paralyzed him and he raised himself up in his chair and his brain battled with a lofty and a mighty purpose.

Just then, Harry Sims, the wine-clerk of the Frontenac, rose, and, laying his hand on Fortier's shoulder, said: "Old boy! take a friend's advice. Quit the game, for it will cripple you financially."

"Let me play," interposed Fortier, "and if I

lose all I have in the world, on this merciless, black devil!"

A spiteful look stole over Von Klingfeld's ugly, black face. The door closed—Harry Sims was gone, and now the two men were alone.

Just then a card fell to the floor and Francois got on his knees to look for it. An opportune moment now presented itself for the cowardly act, and, with wonderful rapidity, Von Klingfeld's fingers dropped a white powder into the empty glass, that Francois had been using, as he said: "Well, Francois, while you are looking for the card, I may as well open another bottle. I suppose you can stand another champagne." Then the strange man in black opened another bottle and poured the foaming, hissing liquid into the glass containing the poison, and, when Fortier placed the last card on the table, he was busy filling his own glass. Now both drank heartily, and a devilish look of triumph was visible on Von Klingfeld's black face and, under his breath, he again cursed his partner.

Fifteen minutes later, Francois Fortier rose from the table, for a strange, numb feeling was creeping into every muscle of his whole anatomy. Some strange force was overpowering him, and he threw his cards to the table and said: "Enough, I play no more. Von Klingfeld count up your card! How much do I owe you?"

A deep silence followed. There was an almost superhuman look of anguish on Fortier's troubled, pale face.

"Only a small matter," answered the elegantly dressed German. "Only six hundred dollars—which, mark you, have to be paid by to-morrow afternoon. Are you prepared, sir?"

Herr Von Klingfeld expected strange things would happen, and little did he dream that Francois Fortier was prepared to meet his demands and, when two, trembling fingers pulled forth a blank cheque from a well-nigh empty purse, his wild eyes looked fiercer and stranger than ever.

"Six hundred dollars," stammered forth Francois, "it is just the amount to my credit in the bank." In a minute the cheque was filled out and in the hands of the strange man in black.

"Well, the game is over, and you are the loser, Francois. Ha! ha! cheer up!" broke forth Von Klingfeld loudly, "You seem heart-broken, but don't let small things like this trouble you. When do you desire revenge?" The Professor's loud, unbearable laugh again sounded through the smoke-filled room, and every muscle in Francois' body trembled strangely.

"Revenge, did you say?" questioned he. "Never! never!"

"Good! Then this day brings me a double victory," shouted the strange man triumphantly, but little did Francois dream what these words meant. With a sudden turn Francois Fortier sprang to the door, like a pursued hare. There was a slight noise and then he was gone.

A few minutes passed and the strange man in black boarded the car, bound for Sydenham street. In another hour he was in Hotel Lafayette and entered room 45. A moment later, the heavy black mustache and beard, and deep-colored glasses fell to the floor and the man was no longer Prof. Herman Von Klingfeld—but Count Albertini—the rival of Francois Fortier, for the hand of Beatrice St. George.

Albertini was restless, and hyena-like paced the floor of his handsomely furnished room, while he cursed and swore, by all that was holy, that he would sooner see Francois Fortier dead than married to Beatrice St. George. And, in a maniacal fit of excitement, he cried out: "Ah, Beatrice St. George, I will yet bend your haughty, young head. The mortgage scheme—false though it be—is sure to work, and you will marry me to save your father from disgrace. Ha! Ha! St. George, this was a capital idea of yours—this mortgage affair! But, should the scheme fail after all, what then? Ah, then, there is still hope; there is something that will not fail. The

poison—the poison will work and to-morrow's sun will shine upon the form of Beatrice's lover in some lonely, forsaken street. Bravo! Revenge—revenge is sweet! But what if the poison should not take effect? Well, then, Fortier will do away with himself. The thought of having to return to Beatrice, poorer than the poorest ragman in the street, will overwhelm him in his distress. He can never again face the girl he loves—never! Beatrice! Beatrice St. George! You shall yet be mine—mine in body and soul!" And again the Count swore desperately. Then he walked to his desk. A letter was lying there. He opened it and read it. It was from the office of the Hon. Harvey St. George. Count Albertini's eyes eagerly scanned the contents. His face turned white, his jaws chattered and again a fierce volley of curses rang through the room, as he tore the letter into a hundred little pieces.

Then, weak and exhausted, he sank into his chair, his fists were clenched and an agonizing cry of despair filled the room. "Too late! too late!" he groaned, as he buried his miserable face in his hands.

CHAPTER III.

The clock on the tower of the little, quaint church near the park had just struck the hour of ten and, for two long hours, Beatrice St. George had now been waiting in the darkness for Francois. And still he did not come. She was sure something had happened and her poor heart trembled with fear, and now for the fifth time she entered the dear, little church, and knelt in front of the humble statue of Our Lady above which several pale lights were burning—clear and suspended in the darkness, like fiery stars. And again her fingers wandered sadly over her cherished beads.

Shortly afterwards, there were footsteps on the pavement; the distant sound became clearer and clearer, and, presently, a staggering man passed the little church. It was Francois. His face was pale, his lips were bloodless, and he was raving in a mad delirium. The drug was doing its deadly work.

"Beatrice! Beatrice!" he cried out sorrowfully, but the gentle breeze, blowing through the lonely avenue of maples alone made answer. On he stumbled, into the park near by, little know-

ing whither he was going. The whole earth was swimming before his eyes and he was hurrying on blindly and his mind was being tossed about madly by merciless winds of thought. Poor, poor man! He was unconscious of everything about him and on he ran, muttering inaudible words to the spectral night that lay over the city like some evil, brooding spirit—dark and unfathomable.

Presently a woman descended the steps of the old church, and, wrapping her warm woolen shawl about her, halted on the pavement and listened eagerly for a moment. It was Beatrice. The winds were now beginning to settle and the night was getting brighter, for through a dark mass of clouds, the moon was peeping serenely and, presently, she burst forth in all her splendor, flooding the whole city with her sombre gleams of silver light. Beatrice was happy, for a new hope had suddenly risen on the darkened border of her wild despair, as her eyes fell upon some white object on the pavement directly ahead of her. In a minute she was there and picked it up. It was a handkerchief, and, on raising it to the light, she read upon it the name of Francois Fortier. Her blood almost stood still in her veins; a feeling of weakness came upon her, as she stood there motionless, her eyes fixed upon the moon and the glorious, blue sky, gemmed with fiery stars.

There was an almost wild look of suffering on her face as she hastened through the park, her little beads dangling down at her side and her bloodless lips, tuned to some sweet prayer.

Francois Fortier was now wandering through the dense willow groves in the park, near the banks of the foaming and splashing waters, that thundered loudly into the bright moonlight around.

"The sea was all a boiling, seething froth,
And God Almighty's guns were going off
And the land trembled"——

but Francois heard and saw nothing. He was now walking along the very edge of the bank and, had not the strong arm of a woman pulled him back, he would have stumbled into that deep, hissing, wild abyss of angry water below. Just then the moon peered through the willows, and one could see the pale face of the frightened woman. It was Beatrice.

"O God! 'tis Francois," she exclaimed as fresh tears trickled into her sunless eyes. "But how strange he looks! Speak! Speak Francois! 'Tis Beatrice who calls thee."

But not a word passed his trembling lips. His tired, blood-shot eyes wandered aimlessly to the woman's face. He sighed deeply, but that was all, and mechanically Beatrice led him to a bench near by, and sitting him down, held his droop-

ing head in her strong arms. And slowly his eyes closed, while he drifted into a sound, healthful sleep, which lasted some hours. The warm rose color gradually returned to his cheeks; his face was getting brighter, and, when he opened his eyes again, Beatrice's heart gave one wild throb of joy. At first he seemed dazed, but, when his eyes wandered to that dear face, bending over him, he said: "Ah, Beatrice, it is you; how good of you!" Then he told her of all that had happened in that smoke-filled room at the Hotel Frontenac; but she only smiled, and, raising herself proudly, placed her hand on his young shoulder and said, somewhat softly: "Is that all? Ah! what is money, after all? Francois you have brains and an honest heart, and I—I have two strong arms, that can work for Life's bitter crust of bread. Let the past take care of itself! There is a future awaiting us, in which we may yet taste the sweets of a new-born happiness."

Francois Fortier raised his fresh, young face to hers and, trembling with emotion, said: "Beatrice, I will throw all my wasted years behind me and, by the grace of God, from this night on, I will live a better and a purer life. To-morrow I will call in to see good Father Stanislaus for I feel, that this night, my soul has been saved from deep ruin. To Thy far-seeing guidance, O

heavenly Father, I now commit my future." Then his voice grew hoarse, the tears rolled down his ruddy cheeks and there was an expression of sadness on his young and handsome face as he said:

"Ah! who am I that God hath saved
Me from the doom, I did desire,
And crossed the lot myself had craved.
To let me higher?

What have I done that He should bow
From Heaven to choose a wife for me?
And what deserved, he should endow,
My home with THEE."

Then he took Beatrice's warm hand in his own, and there was a look of determination in his sparkling eyes as he said, somewhat sadly: "Forgive me, Beatrice, for my waywardness! This week I will make a general confession, and I will seek the Saviour, in his tabernacle, from Whom I have been estranged so many years. I swear it!" And he raised his eyes to the blue sky above him and piously made the sign of the cross.

It had been a happy night for Beatrice after all, and, as they passed the little church again, she could not help repeating to herself the poet's tender lines:—

"Manlike is it to fall into sin,
Fiendlike is it to dwell therein;

Christlike is it for sin to grieve,
Godlike is it all sin to leave."

Then her lips moved and an angel in heaven recorded another prayer of thanksgiving from a grateful, noble heart.

The next evening Francois Fortier knelt in the confessional, and good old Father Stanislaus, spoke tenderly to him. "The sacred blood of Jesus," he said, "will wash out all the stains that sin has made upon your soul. It was on Calvary's Cross that a merciful Saviour suffered for just such sins as yours, dear child. The good Lord is always pleased to welcome back his erring children. He is a kind and merciful Father and, again, he speaks his words of love and sympathy to you, dear child:—"Come unto Me, all you, who are weary and sorrow-laden, and I will give you rest." Kneel my son, with penitent heart, in the shadow of the Cross of Calvary, and He will forgive you. Bury your Past here to-night in this confessional, and face the morning of your rosy future, with new ambitions, new hopes and a pure heart. God bless you! Remember me in your prayers, my son!"

That evening as Francois knelt in the light of the lamp of the sanctuary there were tears of joy on his blushing cheeks, while his lips whispered to his grateful soul: "Oh! what a weight is lifted from my heart! Oh! I am so happy!"

Two weeks later, the bells of the old Franciscan church rang out their silver peals of gladness over the sunny, thatched roofs of the city. That morning Beatrice St. George and Francois Fortier were married by the gentlehearted Father Stanislaus.

Fifteen years have passed since that happy day. Francois Fortier, just in the prime of life, is now the proprietor of one of the largest manufacturing concerns in New York city and never, since that memorable night in the Hotel Frontenac, has he held a card in his hand again.

Mrs. Fortier is as happy as a lark in her home on West Sixteenth Street. Her two children, a boy and a girl, are all in all to her, and she is never so happy, as when in the presence of her darlings. The only sorrows, that, darken her bright future, are thoughts of her dear father, in that far-off Canadian city. In all these fifteen years, she has never neglected writing him—but never a line comes back to cheer her longing and troubled heart.

Christmas was drawing near, and one evening she said to her husband, "Francois, will you do me a favor?"

"Certainly, dear. I will be only too happy."

"Well, then, let us make a novena! Offer up your prayers for my intention! I cannot tell you

what it is at present but, some day, you shall know, dear—some day!"

The nine days ended on Christmas morning, and Mr. and Mrs. Fortier both received Holy Communion, while the air was ringing with jubilant glorias of praise.

On their return from Mass, Mrs. St. George found several letters in the Christmas mail. One of them bore a Canadian postmark and, somewhat nervously, she opened it first. Imagine her surprise when she read the following:

My own dear child!

Forgive your poor father for all his coldness of heart. Fifteen long years have passed, since last I saw your dear face and, in all these fifteen years, I have been so unhappy. Dear Beatrice, I received all your many kind, affectionate letters and often I wept for hours after I had read them, and when I tried to answer them, I could not write a single line. The cruel and relentless father that I had been, I felt unworthy even to write a single word to you. I know that I treated you shamefully, nay, disgracefully, Beatrice, but oh! it was my pride and my bad temper that drove me to it all. Now, I realize, when it is too late, how sinful it was of me. Count Albertini is dead. Shortly, after your marriage, he returned to Italy and, several months later, I read of his having been murdered in a gambling den

in Naples. Thus ended this miserable man, who brought into this world the bitter cross, upon which the last fifteen years of my life have been crucified. Forgive me, dear child! Forgive me, Francois—for God knows I have suffered enough!

And now, my dear children, I must tell you something, which no doubt will surprise you, and I am sure you will be delighted. Yesterday morning at eight o'clock, I was baptized a Catholic by Father Stanislaus, in the very church you were married in just fifteen years ago, and, this morning, I received my first Holy Communion. Constance Burke knelt at my side. Oh! rejoice with me, for this has been the happiest day in all my life. This, then, is my Christmas surprise for you—but there is still another in store. To-night I leave for New York. I am coming to spend the remainder of my days with you and the children. Father Stanislaus and good old Constance Burke accompany me, and they will spend their holidays with you. Again, then, dear children, I entreat you, forgive and forget!

Your penitent father,

HARVEY ST. GEORGE.

When Mrs. Fortier finished reading the letter, she cried out gladly, while tears of joy were rolling down her soft cheeks: "O God be praised!

The prayer is answered. Oh! my heart breaks with joy! Read! Francois, read!" and she handed him the letter.

And, together they stood on that bright Christmas morning, under the beautifully moulded arches of the drawing room, decorated with holly and mistletoe—their lives turned to a new joy, and their eyes, gazing, far beyond the frosty gates of the morning, into the golden mist of the future.

A VOICE IN THE NIGHT-WINDS.

The shades of night—dark and gloomy—had fallen upon a peaceful Canadian city. In its deserted streets the wild November winds were tearing madly through the naked willows. Nature was singing her saddest songs. The old Professor's face bore a few lines of care, as he sat in his cheerful little study, while the cold, drizzling rain was beating a soft tattoo upon the window-pane, adding a tone of pity to the otherwise solitary moan of Autumn.

I could not help admiring the kind, old, gray-haired man before me. His face was one that always inspired me with kindlier thoughts. There was a wealth of sweetness in his smile, and in his eyes one could see the reflection of the true, pure soul within. He was advanced in the seventies—this noble old oak that had withstood the blasts of many winters. His form was erect and his step firm, but he still loved to meet the boys—"his" boys he called them—at his daily classes in University Hall. He was active and studious, notwithstanding his years. Often, yes, very often, we could see a dim, pale light in the Professor's study, and the old, gray-haired man

bending over his books, long after the lonely midnight had extinguished her starry lamps in the heavens.

On this particular night I just happened to drop in on the Professor, and was surprised to find him in a depressed and melancholy mood, for he, of all mortals, appeared to possess the sunniest and brightest of dispositions. He was sitting in his quaint old armchair and when I entered his face brightened, but it was only for a moment.

The fire in the grate was burning low, and the sparks, glowing with light, leaped and died away, like the sunbeams of a departing day. Suddenly he raised himself in his chair, and, in a tone of sweetness, said to me: "Do you hear the plaintive strains the winds are singing to-night? They make me sad, and well they may. This is the month of the poor souls, and, do you know, I have been sitting here for several hours saying my beads, for, in the voices of these lonely November winds, I seem to hear nothing but the cries and pleadings of those suffering ones, those prisoners of the Christ-King, who thirst for the sunshine of God's pure smile."

Then he turned slightly, and there was a momentary pause. I looked up at him, and in his eye a tear glistened. Glancing about the room, at the shelves that held volumes and volumes of

history and literature, he exclaimed—and his voice had a tone of pity in it: "Ah, my books! Cherished and silent friends! You beckon me in vain. Often you cheered me in my weary hours, but to-night you cannot win my spirits."

The old Professor then rose and stirred the fire in the grate. The rain was still falling and the winds were still chanting their weary monotonies. He paused and stood in the middle of the room and listened, while a smile brightened his countenance. I was rude enough to ask the meaning of the smile, and he murmured softly: "I only looked down the pathway of the years, and I heard the songs of my youth vibrate through the lonely corridors of Time—and I was happy. That is all."

Then sinking into the old armchair, and opening an old diary that lay upon the table, he read the following tender lines:

"When night has come and all the world is still.
And sweet the shadows dance about at will
And chase each other round the old, old room,
Where oft I sit in silence and in gloom,
'Tis then my thoughts, by music borne along,
Awake the echoes of my youthful song,
That lingers soft entrancing and reveals
The wealth of joy that the dead Past conceals—
And on the wings of Mem'ry long it sways
That joyful peal—the song of childhood's days."

Nervously his fingers turned over a few pages, and his mellow voice again filled the room, as he slowly read:

"My thoughts do sigh and leap far o'er the brink
Of misty years. In vain sad tears conceal
The noble face, that smiled upon my way
And cheered me on. Yet, O that mournful day,
When last I saw its sweet smile fade and steal—
My heart was crushed—dark clouds spread over-
head;

I stood alone and wept; a friend lay dead."

When he had finished, he closed the book, and long he gazed upon a little picture in front of him, and murmured: "Ah! that noble face! My mother's! In memory it is dear to me still, with its look, so bright and tender, so noble and consoling. The soft, sweet smile that kissed her silver locks glows just as brightly as in the long ago; it lingers o'er my pathway yet and lures me on. The snow-white locks, the wrinkled brow, the tender eyes—the homes of love and pity—ah! can I ever forget them? Can I ever forget how, in the summers of my childhood, she caressed and fondled me in her loving arms and kissed my tears away? 'Tis long since then, my child, and now she, too, sleeps sweetly in her grave. In Spring the violets bend their little, blue heads to kiss her breast and the birds softly sing their gentle requiems. Do you know, my

boy, I hear my mother's voice in these pleading, sobbing, November winds. She is calling me, and I feel that these pleasant haunts will not claim me much longer and death to me soon will be doubly sweet."

I tried to steer the dear old man's thought into pleasanter channels, and, in a measure at least, succeeded. He spoke of his early days at college, its joys, its hopes, its disappointments. His eloquence stirred my heart to nobler purposes, nobler thoughts. He recounted his days at the University, and reviewed the motley company of young men that had passed out of its sacred portals into the vast arena of life. Then his thoughts stole back to the days of his childhood. His thin, pale fingers still held fast the cherished beads. In his eyes the tears glistened, and on his lips there was the motion of a prayer. "Cherish the traditions and teachings of your childhood's days," he said to me. "They hold for you, my boy, an endless boon of joy. What memories cluster - and the happy scenes of child life! Memories so pure and sweet, whose sacred voices will echo through the silence of past golden years and bring you joy when life's last shades are gathering. My mind is filled with thoughts like these, and my dear mother is the burden of them all. She it was who fashioned my career and made my early life so pleasant and profitable. She it was who

often told my youthful heart those fond, sweet stories which ever delight children—tales of fairies and their princely castles, tales of heroes and warriors of a bygone day. Some of them are forgotten, but one still clings to the memory of scenes in childhood's sunny days. Its most cherished fragments still remain. Listen, then, my boy, to this sweet and tender tale."

The kind Professor settled himself into a more comfortable position, and then began:

"Many, many years ago, among the sunny, vine-clad hills of France, there dwelt an organ-builder—Pierre by name. He was young and handsome—as fair a picture as the heart of woman could desire—manly in form, though young in face, with dark-brown, lustrous eyes and a pale, creamy complexion which intensified the roses on his cheeks. Then, too, there was the expression of a wealth of tenderness in his smile that ever lingered upon his noble features. All in all, his face was a picture of honesty; kindness, too, shone forth in the twinkle of his eye, and many a poor one forgot not to mention the name of Pierre in his evening prayers.

"Pierre had built many organs of the sweetest tone and the finest workmanship. His last effort, however, surpassed all expectations, and when the organ was finished, Pierre's handsome face glowed with joy, and, bending his knees, he

raised his spirit in prayer to Heaven in thanksgiving to God.

"At an early age Pierre had been left without father and mother; in his bereavement Father Felicien, the learned, gray-haired priest and pedagogue of the village, had been to him father and constant friend. He loved the good priest tenderly and to show his appreciation of the saintly father, he placed the wonderful organ he had just finished in the village church. The people from far and near came to see the young organ-builder's wonderful masterpiece.

"Whenever the church bell announced a wedding and the happy bride entered the church, the organ in the old choir loft would of its own accord begin to play the softest and sweetest strains. It seemed as if unseen fingers had stirred the cold, ivory keys to music; so sweet was it, that it sounded like the songs of angels—an echo from another world.

"The peasants of the village were surprised, astonished, amazed; they came to pray, but alas! they could not. The music, like a breath from Heaven, had stolen over them, and they knelt there absorbed in rapture. No one could explain, and all praised Pierre—the pride of the little French village.

"One of the most frequent and devout visitors to the old stone church on the hill was Lucille,

the only child of Francois Lablanc, a poor and humble planter. The suns of twenty summers had warmed the roses in her cheek, and her soft brown hair hung in tresses over her comely shoulders. She was a modest maiden, and many were the admiring eyes riveted upon her as she knelt absorbed in prayer, at Mass on Sundays. Her serene expression resembled that of the gentle Madonna. None loved her more than Pierre. They had been playmates from childhood, and, when Father Felicien announced that Pierre and Lucille were to be married, no one was surprised and all rejoiced.

"The wedding day arrived in due time. When Pierre led his bride across the threshold of the old gray church, his heart throbbed wildly in its beats of pride and ambition. An awful change had taken place in the heart of our hero. He little thought of his bride—much less of his God. His one absorbing idea was *his own* greatness. His mind dwelt upon his wonderful organ and on the praise people would bestow upon *him*, when it would play again of its own accord upon *their* entry into the church. Such then were his thoughts as he passed into the village church with Lucille.

"They advanced slowly—but alas! the organ was as silent as the tomb; not a sound of music stirred the air. Pierre's heart sank, for he

thought in his own base pride, that it was an omen—a message sent from Heaven to warn him of some fault or shortcoming in his beloved Lucille—she who was so good, so noble, so pure. Could she, then, have been false to him, the girl he knew as a child, whom he loved as a woman? Was she to seal the marriage ceremony with a treacherous lie?

“The whole day passed and not a word did Pierre speak to his innocent bride and when night threw her dusky mantle over the sleeping village, he secretly stole away through his open window, and, in his heart, bade good-bye to Lucille forever. Forever, did I say?

“He wandered on and on, from town to town, over hills and over plains, unnoticed and unknown. Finally he reached a new country where he settled, a stranger amongst strangers. For fifteen years he dwelt there, and miserable years they were. His was no longer the ruddy face of youth; wrinkles of pain and despair had driven away his sunny smile. One day his heart was breaking with longing for the home of his childhood and his abandoned wife. He remembered how good and pious Lucille had been—a veritable lily of France—and he, how base, suspecting and false. He tried to banish these thoughts, but alas! the longing desire would not be appeased. Was he then, going mad? His

very thoughts seemed to eat into his heart's flesh and leave their wounds bleeding there.

"At last he decided to return and beg forgiveness. By day and night he journeyed towards the home of his youth; the nearer he approached the stronger grew his longing and the deeper his anxiety. And Lucille? Would she ever be able to forgive him—to forget all? He had traveled for months, and his journey was now nearing its end. One morning he saw in the distance the tower of the village church rising from the sun-kissed horizon; the cross-tipped spire was golden in the sunlight. His heart beat wildly within him. Did the cross that had so often smiled upon him in the long ago again inspire hope, that he sped on so eagerly with renewed strength and vigor?

"The peasants were just on the way to the vineyards for their daily work. He passed them by in silence; no one recognized him—he was so changed. A few spoke, in an undertone, words which Pierre could not understand. One in passing said to a companion, 'He is either a thief or a fool.'

"When he reached the gate of the city he was panting for breath. His whole frame was trembling like an aspen leaf in a thunder-storm. A funeral procession was slowly coming down the street, and a crowd of people, young and old,

were bringing up the rear. Nearer and nearer it came. Did no one recognize in him the long-lost Pierre? All passed him by and none deigned to speak. The procession was moving on—the coffin, borne by loving hands, covered with wreaths of beautiful flowers, was accompanied by a crowd of weeping villagers.

"Pierre could resist no longer and, in a scarcely audible tone, muttered: 'Whom, good people, do you bury that you weep so?' An old, gray-haired woman heard and answered: 'Ah! it is the wife of the organ-builder; the wicked man left her fifteen years ago; she was so good and kind to everyone. The poor, dear soul! How we shall miss her! She was a mother to the poor children of the village. See! how their tears are falling in gratitude. They say her cross was hard to bear, but she bore it patiently enough God knows! And now they are taking her to the little church on the hill, in which they will bury her.'

"Lucille! my poor Lucille!—Dead! My God! Have I—' It was a piercing cry. Pierre had spoken and now he stood speechless. His face was white with horror, his bitter tears fell fast. A moment later he sprang to the side of the coffin and joined the mourning throng; there his sobs and sighs passed unnoticed for all were weeping.

"The procession had now reached its destination and, when the pall-bearers had crossed the threshold of the church, the organ in the choir-loft began, of its own accord to play again—sweeter than it had ever played before, sweeter than an organ was ever known to play.

"All eyes were wet with tears. Old men and women, fathers, mothers, children—all wept. The coffin was placed before the altar. The organ's voice now rose and fell in notes alternately of joy and of regret. All ears listened. It seemed as if the heavens had opened and the voices of the angels had united in strains of forgiveness—so wonderfully sweet was the music.

"Pierre clung fast to the pillar at the foot of the altar. He was weak. The journey of weeks had wearied him. His eyes were closed, and, upon his lips, there moved the message of a prayer. Yet he was not sad; his face bore a look of joy, for he knew by the voice of the pealing organ—he had heard the song and understood all—that God had forgiven him. And, when the last, soft, sweet note of that song of forgiveness had died away, Pierre reeled, staggered, and fell on the stony pavement—dead.

"Then Father Felicien softly folded Pierre's hands on his breast. The enchanted organ played a slow and tender *requiem aeternam* and gradually the sweet, pure notes died away into the

plaintive tones of a *dies irae*. Then the organ stopped and its voice was hushed forever."

The old Professor had come to the end of his story just as the clock struck the hour of midnight. I was loth to go; for, I knew that I was in the presence of a good and noble man—"a palace of sight and sound," as Emerson once wrote, "carrying in his senses the morning and the night, and the unfathomable galaxy; in his brain the geometry of the city of God; in his heart the power of love and the realms of right and wrong." When he bade me farewell at the door, the rain was still falling; the sighing November winds still spoke in pleading voices. Again he listened, and a strange, glad light crept into his anxious eyes.

The morning dawned bright and clear, with the twittering of sparrows in the lonely willows. A few streaks of red painted the eastern horizon and the rising sun peeped out over the distant, purple hills. The college campus was deserted, and on the rich, old Gothic towers of the University the flags were at half-mast. Through the windows of the quaint study, a few yards back from the street, the sunbeams were stealing but by no means disturbing the gentle old Professor in his great arm-chair. In his hands were twined the cherished wooden beads. His eyes gazed far away and on his pale, sweet, noble face a smile still lingered.

He had heard his mother's voice above the sighing November winds—and had responded to the call. He had reached his heavenly home.

LIGHT BEYOND THE STARS.

CHAPTER I.

"Gertrude, you look sad this afternoon. Why, what is the matter, child?" asked Mrs. Grayson, as she raised her eyes from the book which she had finished reading. Just then a girl turned her head slightly, like a frightened dove. She was barely eighteen—a lily with all its sweetest leaves yet folded—slight and graceful, with the features of a saint, whose expression was half of sweetness, half of innocence. Her little head, covered with ripples of deep black hair, was proudly set upon a snowy, slender neck, and her eyes were large, tender, living eyes, capable of changing with every thrill of emotion. She had been sitting there, in the winter twilight, gazing idly into the deserted, snow-filled street, when the voice of Mrs. Grayson suddenly called her away from her little world of thought, and swayed by tender feeling, she answered:

"Yes, I am sad—and why should I not be? Ten years ago to-day dear mother was buried, and oh, what a gloomy day it was for me. It was just a day like this, with sullen skies, bitter winds and heavy snowfalls. Yes, and when I

left the city of the dead, that awful morning, I knew that I had left my best friend behind. Poor, dear mother! To think that thou must sleep in that lonely, snow-covered grave!"

The tears crept into Gertrude's eyes, and she was silent for a few minutes. Then again she went on:

"But, Mrs. Grayson, you have been so good to me, and I am grateful. You have been to me a second mother, and it pains me deeply to think that I will some day have to leave you."

"Leave me, Gertrude? Why, what do you mean?" asked Mrs. Grayson.

"I mean that I intend to go away. I am not happy here, though you have been goodness itself to me. The world is empty and cold, and I am going to sacrifice all its pleasures and pomps for the convent. Yes, Mrs. Grayson, I am going, and I will spend life's remaining days there. I have chosen my vocation, and when the happy day arrives, and I receive the humble habit and veil of a nun, oh then my fondest hope will have been realized, then my dearest prayer will have been answered."

"Gertrude Ferguson, are you really serious?" questioned Mrs. Grayson, half uneasily. "Child, this is a foolish fancy of yours. I am a Protestant, and I cannot understand how you Catholic girls can sacrifice all life's gayeties for the dull,

cold, methodical and monotonous life of an obscure, insignificant nun. How dare you bargain for such an existence, when the world, full of promise to the brim, offers you wealth, distinction and happiness? Gertrude, think of your future! It is fresh as the rosy morning, glorious and full of promise; it is bright as the noon-day sun. When your dying mother asked me to be a mother to her only child I swore that I would protect and guard you always, and now you speak of leaving me forever. But, Gertrude, if it is your wish, why, I have nothing to say. However, you are quite young, and you need be in no hurry—so do stay with me a while longer."

Gertrude did not answer, but sighed deeply, and Mrs. Grayson rose and proudly left the room. Then she sank down upon the sofa, and again her thoughts stole back to that lonely grave, in a distant country churchyard, and her lips moved in prayer, while the shadows were creeping stealthily around the silent, cosy drawing-room.

The Graysons were well known in and around Evansville. They were not a rich family by any means. But they always kept up a fashionable appearance, and lived as much as possible like the Cathcarts and the Smiths, whose income nearly doubled or trebled their own. They belonged to that sort of people who sacrificed everything for outward appearance, and when Mr. Grayson died

everybody had it that surely now Mrs. Geoffrey Grayson would have to come down from her once lofty pedestal. But no, Mrs. Grayson had made up her mind at the outset that she would dress as well as she ever did, and she accomplished her object, and was more than ever a slave to Dame Fashion. Her bonnets, cloaks and gowns were made after the latest Parisian patterns, and she had a collection of diamonds that would have maddened the heart of any woman with pride. She had an only child. The boys at the Club Sans Souci called him Jack. He was not more than twenty-five, and the pride he had inherited from his parents found a favorable nidus in his young heart, and burst forth in all its virulence. Through his dead father's influence, Jack had received an appointment as cashier in a large loan office. The salary, however, was not over great, but there were good chances for promotion.

It was the last day of the old year, and Jack Grayson was sitting at his books balancing up the monthly account. A shadow of despair crept into his young face, and his fingers trembled visibly, as he counted up the long rows of figures. "A shortage of two hundred dollars!" he gasped, wildly. "How can I ever make it up? How foolish of me to have taken out just four times the amount of my monthly salary! But oh—the debts were crushing, this high life was crippling

me. I was going mad. But what am I now, oh God, but a liar and a thief."

He turned sickly pale, and buried his face in his hands.

"The money must be in the safe to-night," he groaned, hoarsely, "if not, then—oh, my God, I see it all. I will be discharged, and disgraced—oh wicked wretch that I am!"

He was silent for a moment, and heavy beads of perspiration were forming on his cold forehead. His eyes opened staringly. His pen fell to the floor, and he whispered to himself:

"I have it. Mother's diamond brooch! Ah! it will serve my purpose. I will steal the valuable jewel from the casket on her dresser—and pawn it. It will bring me the two hundred dollars. Ha, ha! She will never suspect me. Two months ago to-day I offered my heart, my hand to Gertrude. I loved the girl, but she spurned my offer. Now the hour has come in which I will do my deadly work. A mother has no right to shelter the girl who offered an insult to her son. I will turn my mother's heart to bitter hatred by fastening the theft of the brooch upon—upon Gertrude Ferguson."

Just then a wild, cutting laugh rang through the empty office, and in another minute Jack Grayson disappeared in the crowds that were thronging along King street. Just as he was turning the corner he met his mother.

"Ah, Jack! Where are you going?" she asked, pleasantly.

"I am going home for dinner, mother. This is my busy day," answered he, huskily.

"You may tell Gertrude, then," she added, "that I'll have dinner at two o'clock. This is the night of Mrs. Cathcart's New Year party, Jack, and I have not yet ordered the flowers."

Fifteen minutes later, Jack Grayson unlocked the door of his mother's private boudoir. In another minute the casket on the dresser was open—and there lay the crested diamond brooch in all its brightness. Quickly he grasped it and placed it in his pocket. Then he drew forth a tiny, embroidered handkerchief, which he had just procured in one of the upstairs rooms. A hideous smile stole over his ugly face, and he chuckled lustily, as the perfumed handkerchief fell to the floor. Upon it was worked the name of Gertrude Ferguson. A moment later the door was locked, and Jack placed the keys where he had found them.

The city clock had just struck the hour of eight. The night was bright and chilly, and the moon was flooding the city with her golden gleams of light. The streets were filled with dark, surging masses of busy people; all hearts were longing patiently for the dawning of the New Year—the year that was to bring joy to some and sorrow to others.

Gertrude Ferguson was in excellent spirits. Her pure, young heart throbbed gladly within her as she rose from the piano and began to twine branches of holly and mistletoe around the large drawing room mirrors. She could not repress her inner feelings, and suddenly a ripple of girlish laughter sounded through the room. Then she burst into a song. It was the sweetest of music. It was like the song of a lark, so clear, so sweet and tender. Again the words stole upon the silent air—louder than before:

"Let us gather up the sunbeams,
Lying all around our path;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff.
Let us find our greatest comfort
In the blessings of to-day,
With a patient hand removing
All the briars from the way."

Again her laughter filled the room. It was like the sound of a distant river—its rippling waves making music on the rocky ledges.

Just then Jack Grayson passed through the hall, in his full-dress suit. He knocked at the door of his mother's private boudoir and asked:

"Are you ready mother? The coachman is waiting."

"In a few minutes, dear," came the answer, softly.

Jack entered the drawing-room, and threw

himself on the sofa, and waited. Gertrude turned her head and smiled, and Jack's face reddened. A few minutes later there was the sound of a door opening, and, almost breathless, Mrs Grayson sprang into the room, her face betraying very forcibly the varying emotions of chagrin, mortification and despair. She bestowed a searching glance upon her son, and then her eyes were riveted upon Gertrude. Her teeth chattered; she tried to speak, but the words stuck to her throat. Again her eyes flamed with righteous indignation, and, in a hysterical tone of voice, she accused Gertrude of the theft of the missing jewel.

Gertrude's face paled. She almost sank to the floor, but in a moment she was herself again. She raised her deep, blue, innocent eyes to the angry, stern, accusing face in front of her, and answered, tremulously:

"Madam, it is false! I am innocent! I know nothing of the theft. In all these years I have never even dared to enter your private dressing room. How can you therefore blame me? O God! Thou knowest I am innocent."

"You lie, girl! This speaks for itself," thundered forth the enraged woman. "This handkerchief was found in front of my dresser. How did it get there? Now explain that if you can, innocent angel!"

Jack Grayson smiled bitterly, and, rising from the sofa, turned to his mother and said, in a sarcastic tone of voice:

"Mother, I always told you that your heart would be stabbed by the cruel ingratitude of this thankless girl. That time has come."

Gertrude snatched the handkerchief from the haughty woman, and glancing down at the name, uttered an exclamation of surprise. Her cheeks paled, her eyes opened widely, and she fell to the sofa, trembling like a leaf, and wept like a child.

Again Mrs. Grayson's shrill voice rang out wildly, like the cry of a woman going mad:

"Gertrude, I do not believe you. Wretched, unhappy girl! Little did I dream that I was sheltering a thief. I have no affection for you any longer. The very sight of your face is hateful to me. Come, Jack, let us go! I feel little like enjoying myself this evening. Gertrude—Miss Ferguson, I mean—remember this affair is not settled yet. I will see you on the morrow. I am afraid it will be a sorry New Year for you."

When Gertrude again raised her head from the sofa they were gone. She walked over to the piano, but she—poor girl—was in no mood for playing. Then she opened the front door and stepped out upon the large, open veranda, and looked out into the night. The clock on the

Cathedral tower yonder pointed the hour of ten. It was a glorious night, crowned above with a canopy of blue, gemmed with golden stars. The streets were still lively with people. In another two hours the New Year will be dawning, and there stood Gertrude, in the moonlight, and on her pure, young face the lines of sorrow were deepening.

Then under her breath, she whispered to the busy night winds:

"Heaven bless them for it all! I was hungry, and they gave me bread; I was sick, and they comforted me; I was an orphan, and they took me in. How can they think me so ungrateful? How can they accuse me? Ah no! I am innocent, and God in heaven knows it. That is enough. I know they love me no longer. Their soft, warm hearts are now cold as stone, and I will not bruise my feelings on such barren, hard rocks. How foolish it is for me to worry so! I will pray to God to soften their hearts; I will pray to Him to open their eyes—and some day, some day, He will tell them all."

When Mrs. Grayson and Jack returned home that evening Gertrude Ferguson was gone. On the drawing room table a note awaited them. It read:

DEAR FRIENDS: I am truly poor and needy, yet I feel that I have been dependent upon your

charity long enough. I am leaving you to-night, to return no more. I forgive you both, and beg God to bless you for the kindness you have shown a homeless girl. As a parting gift I ask you to accept these little crucifixes for yourselves. Should we never meet in this world again, remember that the heart of a grateful girl has not yet ceased beating for you. Once more, then, may God bless you and reward you for the kindness you have shown one whom you have known
as

GERTRUDE FERGUSON.

CHAPTER II.

Ten years had passed. The Graysons were preparing to leave Evansville for good. The Spanish-American War was on, and Jack had heard the voice of his stricken country, crying for help. He had enlisted, and in a few days he was going to the front to fight—if needs, to die. It was a sad day for Mrs. Grayson, as she stood at the station, kissing her boy good-bye, and when the train was pulling out and the assembled crowds gave forth a few wild, frantic cheers, that fairly shook the city to its foundations, Jack waved his parting farewells to that lonely, weeping woman on the platform. And, as he raised his arm again and again, one could see a little crucifix hanging from his neck. His mother had tied it there that morning. "This," she said, with tears in her eyes, "is the one poor Gertrude left for you nearly ten years ago. The poor girl, I wonder where she is. Take her gift with you. I have worn mine all these years. The little cross will do you no harm—and, God knows—it may do my boy some good."

Two months later Mrs. Grayson left for New York, to make her home with an only sister re-

siding there. On her way to the depot that morning the postman handed her a letter. It was from Jack. It read:

DEAR MOTHER: We are preparing for a long march up the country and I have only a few minutes to spare. Father McBrady, the dear old army chaplain, who has been so good to me, is waiting for this letter, so I must hurry. It was only yesterday I wrote you, but mother, something is troubling me and I must tell you all. For ten long years I have kept a sinful secret, and oh! you don't know how I have suffered. Mother, Gertrude Ferguson is innocent of the crime we accused her of. Just ten years ago this coming New Year's day I stole the brooch, to make up a shortage at the loan office. The handkerchief was Gertrude's, but I—I placed it there. I know I should have told you this long ago, but, mother, I could not. Forgive me, then, and, if you ever meet Gertrude in this world, ask her to forgive me also—for God knows, I have suffered enough. Your dear

JACK.

It was a cold and stormy night, late in January. Glaring, electric lights contrasted with grim, dark shadows upon the icy pavements of New York city. A cold wind was blowing and the streets were well-nigh deserted. A woman, wrapped in a heavy black shawl, was walking hurriedly up Lexington Avenue. Eagerly she crossed the street and dropped a letter into the mailing-box on the corner. It was Mrs Grayson.

On her way home she had to pass St. Vincent Ferrer's Church. It was brightly illuminated

and every window threw forth a welcome ray of light into the black, inky night around. Mrs. Grayson halted before the sacred edifice. Benediction was being sung—and some strange power held her fast. She did not move a muscle, as she stood there and listened to the loud, majestic peals of the pipe organ, while its music floated out upon the wings of the lonely night.

A moment later a soprano voice swayed by tender feeling, poured forth its pure, sweet, liquid notes. They were clear and joyous as a lark's, now rising, now falling. Never before had Madame Bonvini sung an "O Salutaris" with so much expression. Within the lofty edifice one could have heard a pin drop, and the immense congregation listened eagerly for every word that fell from the singer's lips.

"O Saving Victim, opening wide

The gate of Heaven to man below,

Our foes press on from every side,

Thine aid supply, Thy strength bestow."

Mrs. Grayson drew nearer. That ringing voice spoke to her lonely heart and sought out every longing, every pain. It seemed as if Heaven itself had suddenly opened and an angel's voice was floating on the icy breath of night, so sweet was it—so wonderfully tender.

A minute later the huge door swung open wide; there was a slight noise, and then it closed

again. Mrs. Geoffrey Grayson had entered St. Vincent's and was being ushered into a pew near the pulpit. Again that sweet, pleading strain floated over the heads of the large congregation, and clearly the leading soprano sang:

"To Thy great name be endless praise,
Immortal Godhead, one in three!
O grant us endless length of days
In our true native land with Thee."

Almost unconsciously Mrs. Grayson sank upon her knees and buried her face in her hands; a strange, mysterious feeling was creeping over her restless heart, and the tears were gathering under her eyelids. When the "O Salutaris" was ended, she raised her misty eyes to the pulpit, and there stood Father Anselmo, the learned, white-robed Dominican, his innocent, saintly, religious face aflame with an almost celestial expression. It was the opening night of the mission, and the eloquent theologian was to deliver a series of sermons, and, later on, form a class for those of the Protestant belief who were anxious to study the teachings of the Catholic Church.

Father Anselmo raised his hand to his forehead and piously made the sign of the cross. There was a momentary silence, then he began to speak. He spoke of life in the world as it is; of temptation, sin, shame, disgrace. He told his hearers how Christ had suffered on the Cross of Calvary

for their sins, and that each sin committed by them was said to be but another Calvary of suffering for the heart of the merciful Saviour. He exhorted them most earnestly to live better and purer lives. Then he spoke of Heaven—that home of eternal rest and happiness, which would some day be theirs if they would only follow the Master's precepts. He spoke slowly and distinctly, as he pictured the beauties of that heavenly home beyond the skies, brightened and glorified by the sunshine of God's holy smile. The hearts of the people were stirred to their very depths.

Mrs. Grayson in all her life before had never heard so eloquent a sermon. It was grand and impressive, and the good priest's words had sunk into her very soul. She went home that evening feeling better and happier for it all. The following evening Mrs. Grayson again knelt in St. Vincent's Church. Father Anselmo preached to large and interested congregations. Days, weeks, a month passed—and during this time Mrs. Grayson had been a constant attendant at the mission services. A change was coming upon her. Her former self was gradually disappearing, and she felt it. It was being replaced by a nobler, freer, purer spirit, and she was happy. The distinguished preacher was doing untold good. His was veritably a harvest of souls.

His convert class was daily increasing in numbers.

One day in February, Mrs. Grayson called on Father Anselmo, who received her most kindly.

"Father," she said, "I have come to see you, and you must make me happy. I want you to make a Catholic out of me. I have attended all the mission services so far at St. Vincent Ferrer's, and, of my own accord, I come to you. Will you assist me, Father?"

"Why, certainly, good woman," answered he, softly. "A shepherd of souls is always willing to reclaim sheep that have strayed away from the true fold. I shall only be too happy. It is my duty, and I shall do all I can for you. I meet my class every afternoon at four, and I shall be pleased to see you among them to-morrow. I gave my first instruction yesterday."

Father Anselmo shook hands in parting and smiled gently. "May God bless and guide her," he whispered to himself, as he closed the door and wended his way to the reception room, where other callers were awaiting him.

The next afternoon Mrs. Grayson attended her first instruction. Father Anselmo met her at the door with a smile of welcome. That afternoon he spoke on the Seventh Commandment—"Thou shalt not steal." He grew more eloquent as he proceeded; his clear, ringing, musical voice filled

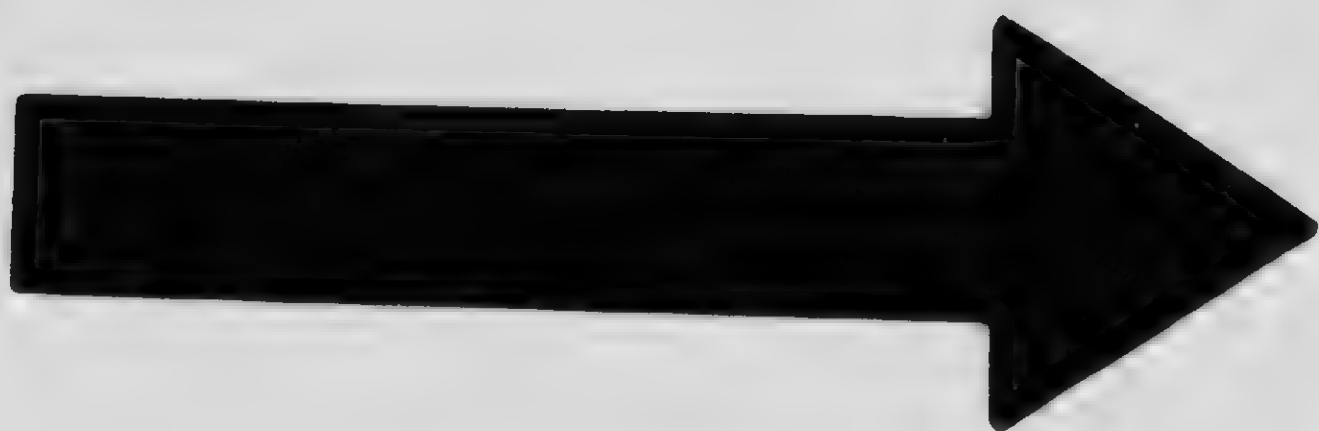
every one with nobler thoughts, nobler purposes. Mrs. Grayson listened to every word that fell from his inspired lips; she was deeply interested. Yet she was sad. The kind priest's words had recalled in her memories of a past that was painful to her, and on her way home that evening she could not help thinking of that New Year's evening, long ago, on which she herself had accused a poor, innocent girl of a theft of which she now knew she was innocent. Poor Gertrude! how she must have suffered. Oh, if she could only go to her now and throw herself at her feet and beg forgiveness—oh, then she could be happy; yes, happy as the day was long. But where was Gertrude Ferguson? Where could she find the poor girl she had wronged? Alas! nobody seemed to have seen or heard anything about her in Evansville, and Mrs. Grayson had almost given her up as dead.

That night she sank upon her knees and kissed the little crucifix which Gertrude had given her, and, in the fullness of her grief, gave vent to bitter tears. Then she lifted her eyes to Heaven and petitioned God to help her to find the blue-eyed girl she had wronged. "O merciful God," she pleaded, "show me poor Gertrude's face, just once again!" Then she rose, and on the darkened horizon of her empty and desolate future a clear, bright ray of hope had suddenly beamed.

CHAPTER III.

Father Anselmo was very busy at St. Vincent's but he loved work when it was done in the name of the Master. Often he would say: "No, I never weary of my work. I am only doing my duty as the humble priest—the shepherd of souls. I love to be near my children, to teach them the glorious paths of virtue, love and humility. The ways that lead to Heaven may be rough and thorny, but remember that behind those cruel and piercing thorns roses are clustered—bright red roses—which will some day be twined into garland wreaths to crown your noble brows, when Death shall gently part the silver threads of life that hold you fast."

The kind, gray-haired theologian and scholar was also overjoyed, for Easter was coming. Next Sunday he himself would baptize seventy converts in dear old St. Vincent's. Mrs. Grayson was also one of the many who rejoiced, for on that day she too, was to be received into the bosom of the Church which she had learned to love so much. What would Jack say, if he only knew? But no, Jack was not to find out until she was a "real" Catholic—and then she would



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write him a long letter herself and surprise him.

She often thought of her poor boy and of the many hardships he had to endure on the distant battlefield, and her eyes would fill with tears. Then she would think of those happy days when he was but the little, golden-haired boy—the idol of her womanly heart. How she had fondled him in her arms in those moments of happiness! But now he was far away from her, fighting bravely for his country. Cheering letters from Jack, however, filled her aching heart with hope. Not a day passed but Mrs. Grayson was seen in the crowds around the newspaper offices, reading the bulletins that came fresh from the seat of war. They were like so many letters from home to her—for was not her heart, her life, her boy out there, and might he not be a victim of the cruel bullet at any moment?

Only three days more and Easter, with its glorious hosannas of praise, would again awake the lonely world, robed for a short season in penitential garments, to visions of beauty and gladness.

It was a beautiful afternoon. The sun was painting New York's lofty towers and buildings with golden gleams of light. The city clock was just pointing the hour of three when the ambulance slowly drew up and stopped in front

of St. Joseph's Hospital. The door was suddenly opened and the form of a dying woman was gently carried up the granite steps on a stretcher by strong, willing hands. Mother Clotilde's kind face whitened, as she turned her eyes to Dr. Steen, the ambulance surgeon.

"An accident, I presume," she said, sadly. "How did it happen?"

The young doctor lowered his eyes and began, and there was a tone of pity in his voice as he said; "The woman had been reading the bulletin boards on one of the down town streets, and just as she was turning the corner a west-bound car struck her and threw her into the air. Willing hands carried her into a drug store near by. It was there I found her in an unconscious condition, but in the ambulance she opened her eyes once and cried out feebly: 'My boy! my boy! Gertrude! where is she?' Then she was silent again, and in an instant her mind was a blank. She opened her eyes widely and stared for a moment and then she closed them again. A few feet away from where she was lying they found this little prayer-book! It is blood-stained, and bears the following inscription: 'To Mrs. Grayson, from Father Anselmo.'"

Mother Clotilde took the little prayer-book in her hand, and the tears were creeping into her eyes as she said softly: "Poor woman! She is

very ill, and she will need all her strength to pull through. Sister Patricia will take charge of her, doctor, and we shall do all we can for the poor soul."

In one of the large rooms in the ward upstairs Sister Patricia sat at the bedside of the poor, unfortunate woman. A whole day had gone by and not a word had passed Mrs. Grayson's lips. Her face was growing paler and there was a look of deep suffering upon it. The good nun watched her patient continually, and upon her lips there lingered the breath of many a tender prayer. The face of the sick woman seemed so familiar to Sister Patricia, but she could not place it, and, as she held the woman's thin hands in her own, she felt that they were getting warmer. A rosy flush was already creeping into the sickly, pallid face. Reaction was evidently being established, and the sweet-faced nun smiled gently.

A moment later Mrs. Grayson opened her eyes half dreamily and stared into the face of the good Sister bending over her. "How my head pains me! Where am I? What has happened to me?" she asked, in a feeble, trembling voice. Sister Patricia whispered something to her; then she closed her eyes and drifted into a sound sleep which lasted some hours.

When again Mrs. Grayson opened her eyes, Father Anselmo stood at her bedside. Her face

was brighter and she talked considerably. "Tomorrow, dear friend," said Father Anselmo, "is Easter Sunday—the day which both yourself and I were looking forward to with sanguine expectations. I regret very much that you will not be able to assist at St. Vincent's, but you will be quite happy here with the good nuns. I shall be here at eight in the morning and then I shall baptize you. Rest yourself now! I shall leave you in Sister Patricia's hands. I'm sure she will make you happy."

When Father Anselmo rose to go, a few stray gleams of sunlight fell upon his noble face and brightened his snow-white locks. He raised his hand in blessing and made the sign of the Cross. An anxious smile stole over Mrs. Grayson's face. When he had gone, Sister Patricia entered the room, with a beautiful bouquet of Easter lilies in her hands.

"Mother Clotilde has sent these up for you," she said kindly, as she put them into a vase on the table. The sick woman smiled her thanks, and her fingers moved nervously to a little crucifix that lay upon her breast.

"What a pretty crucifix you have there, dear," said Sister Patricia softly, as she walked over and looked at it. Almost suddenly the color left her face. A feeling of weakness came over her, and she sank down upon the bed. In an instant she

was on her feet again, and Mrs. Grayson asked nervously: "What is the matter, Sister? Are you ill?"

"No, dear. It is nothing," she replied. "I once had a crucifix like—But no! I must be dreaming." Then she walked to the window and opened it and sighed deeply. The city was lively with people, and a boyish, sweet tenor voice was ringing up from the noisy street. He was one of those little wandering minstrels, and his musical accent was that of a son of sunny, vine-clad Italy. His pure notes rose and fell and melted into each other as he sang:

"Let us gather up the sunbeams,
Lying all around our path;
Let us keep the wheat and roses,
Casting out the thorns and chaff.
Let us find our greatest comfort
In the blessings of to-day,
With a patient hand removing
All the briars from the way."

Sister Patricia could listen no longer, and when she turned and faced the sick woman her heart throbbed with something that was akin to pain. That song had recalled the dearest memories, and her thoughts went back to a New Year's eve, hidden in the far-away haunts of her cherished past. Presently, the lad struck up another strain, and Mrs. Grayson listened eagerly to the Italian love-song. It was so pathetic, and

it floated into the room with a sweetness that was strangely penetrating, and when the harp's last mellow notes died away on the deep silence of the sick chamber, she raised the little crucifix to her lips and kissed it tenderly. Sister Patricia spoke cheering words.

"No, Sister," began Mrs. Grayson slowly, "I cannot feel happy. This little crucifix holds the story of all my unhappiness. The little Italian in the street sang a song which I used to hear years ago, and the song reminded me of the dear girl who gave me this crucifix. If you will listen, Sister, I will tell you my story." Then she raised herself up in her bed and continued:

"Just ten years ago last New Year's, I turned a poor girl out of my house in a town many miles from here. I thought a great deal of her, and would have done anything for her, but that very night I accused her of stealing my diamond brooch. I suspected her strongly, for I found a handkerchief bearing her name in my private dressing-room."

"Handkerchief bearing her name!" cried out Sister Patricia, as she raised herself from her chair nervously and moved towards the bed.

"Yes," went on Mrs. Grayson. "But oh, it was hasty and wrong of me to have accused her. The poor girl, I know now, was innocent of it all. My own son—my own boy, had stolen and

pawned the jewel to make up a shortage at the office that would have disgraced us both. But Jack is a brave boy now, fighting for his country. Yet, oh, I am so unhappy, for I feel that I must make amends to the poor girl I have wronged. I have searched in vain for her all these years, but God I am sure will some day—"

"Lead you to her," interrupted Sister Patricia. "And he has done so. The longer I look into your searching eyes and the longer I listen to your story, the stronger grows the thought that I have at last met my old friend and benefactor—the dearest friend I had in all this world. Mrs. Grayson, is it really—O God be thanked a thousand times!"

The sick woman opened her eyes widely; the surprise had been too much for her, and almost wildly she stared into the pale little face under the black veil. Then she fell back upon the bed, weak and exhausted, murmuring: "Gertrude, my child! Come to my arms; forgive me for all my—"

The poor woman could not say another word. Sister Patricia kissed her cheeks tenderly and sank upon her knees. Together they wept tears of joy, while the Angelus was ringing a solemn peal of prayer over the roof-tops of the city, rich in its twilight glory.

Easter morning dawned with the chirping

and twittering of the busy sparrows in the large pine trees that surrounded the hospital. Mrs. Grayson had rested well all night and she was now experiencing the happiest moments in all her life. Her prayer was answered. She had met the girl she had wronged. Sister Patricia had forgiven her in her heart long years ago. The very night she left the Grayson mansion in Evansville, the sweetest words of forgiveness had fallen from her lips. "Oh, no," she said kindly, "how could I forget you, after all you had done for me. I thought of you daily and remembered you both in my prayers."

"And now, Sister," began the happy woman, "I have a surprise in store for you. Can you guess?" Sister Patricia shook her head in the negative, and then she went on. "Well, Father Anselmo, the dear Dominican, will be here at eight. This morning he receives his large class of converts into the Church at St. Vincent's. I am one of them—but I will not be there, so he is coming to hear my confession and give me my first Holy Communion here. My first Holy Communion! Yes, but Sister, do you know that something tells me it will also be my last. Oh, I am so happy now. If Jack were only here! Yes, Sister, in another few minutes I will be a 'real' Catholic."

When she had finished, Sister Patricia took

her thin hands into hers and said, while tears glistened in her eyes: "Oh, I am also happy. My prayer has been answered."

Mrs. Grayson was growing weaker, and the complications that the doctors had dreaded were slowly setting in. A dark shadow crept into the gentle nun's face.

The hospital clock struck eight, and Father Anselmo had just baptized Mrs. Grayson. Then he heard her confession and administered the Sacrament of the dying. Sister Patricia and the renowned and brilliant theologian knelt at the bedside for fifteen minutes and prayed. Mrs. Grayson repeated all the prayers distinctly, and, when she raised herself slightly to bless herself, there was a slight groan, followed by profuse bleeding from the mouth and nose. The fatal hemorrhage that the doctors had foreseen had taken place, and the end was nigh.

The poor woman was sinking rapidly, and she was gradually lapsing into unconsciousness. She turned slightly and raised her finger and motioned Sister Patricia to her side.

"I am dying. Oh, I am so happy. Pray for me!" she said faintly. Then she closed her eyes, and for the next half hour she was hovering on the brink of eternity. Just then there was a slight rap at the door. Mother Clotilde handed Father Anselmo a letter edged in black.

It was addressed to Mrs. Grayson, and was stamped "important."

The distinguished Dominican was visibly affected. His eyes fell upon the dying woman. Then he handed Sister Patricia the letter and asked her to read it aloud. Trembling with emotion, the good Sister opened it and read softly:

DEAR MRS. GRAYSON: It is my painful duty to inform you of your son's death at the hospital. He died but ten minutes ago. He spoke of you almost until his last breath, and begged me to write you these few lines. Jack was a good soldier—respected and loved by all who knew him. I almost feel as if he had been my own brother. To-morrow I shall offer up my Mass for the repose of his soul. No doubt you will be pained to hear that your son died a Catholic. We were very much attached, and on our tiresome marches through the country I taught him his catechism. I was with him in his last hours and prayed with him. Before he died he handed me this crucifix, which I am sending, with the words: "Send it to mother and tell her her son has atoned for it all. God grant that it may some day be returned to its giver—Gertrude Ferguson." I pray, my dear Mrs. Grayson, that God will strengthen you in this bitter trial, and, in closing, I assure you of my humble prayers.

Yours in Christ,

FATHER McBRADY.

When Sister Patricia had finished reading, a faint whisper echoed through the death chamber. The dying woman opened her eyes and said feebly: "Jack—a Catholic? Thank God! I am go-

ing to Heaven to meet my boy." Then a peaceful smile stole over her face and in another instant her soul had flown heavenwards.

Father Anselmo silently left the room and on his saintly old face there was a look of sadness.

Sister Patricia kissed the little crucifix and determined to keep it always. Then she rose and walked to the window. The bells of the city churches were sounding their anthems of gladness far into the busy streets. The golden gates of the morning were open and the sun was throwing his bright beams on the roof-tops of busy New York. Long she gazed upon that beautiful picture. Everybody was glad; everything looked so cheerful. She alone was sad. Again she raised the little crucifix to her lips, and, while in her deep-blue eyes the tears slowly gathered, her heart was filled with gratitude—for her friends were enjoying the vision of God—the glory of the risen Saviour—the Light beyond the Stars.

THE PARTING OF THE WAYS.

CHAPTER I.

The horse kicked impatiently against the wooden gate, then threw her head into the air and listened eagerly. Only a passing wind came and rattled through the bony trees. The occupant of the sleigh behind was evidently fast asleep. Upon his face was stamped a look of weariness and his breath came in interruptions.

Presently the snow began to fall thicker and thicker. The winds howled through the distant valleys like angry wolves—they were creeping nearer and nearer. The horse fairly shivered in the cold. Again, she turned her head and her eyes tried to seek the occupant in the sleigh. Then a shrill cry rang out into the frozen air; Nell was almost frozen—and suddenly there was a stir under the heavy blankets in the sleigh and two eyes opened to survey the surroundings. It was but a moment and the man jumped out and, patting the horse gently, threw back the gate that opened into a narrow lane, leading to the comfortable stables beyond.

"Asleep again!" he muttered as he led the horse on. "Well! well! The last I knew I was driving out of Kenwick and here I am home

again. I must have been asleep over an hour."

He had now reached the stable door and the horse turned her face gladly to his. "Ah, Nell!" he said tenderly, as his hand stroked the lovely, jet-black mane, "you're a jewel. You always seem to know when your master sleeps and you jog along the lone country roads and always bring me home safely. I often think God must be having a hold of the lines. But you're a jewel, old Nell, and my heart's at rest when you are with me." And again he petted her, as a mother would her child, and she stretched her head so lovingly to him and opened her eyes so widely that she seemed to understand it all.

In a few minutes Nell was warmly housed and the man entered the house on the hill near-by. A little sign near the doorway bore the inscription: "Dr. Stewart Wilkins, Physician." It looked as if it were in its last days, this little sign. It was badly in need of a coat of paint, but what matter, since every child within a radius of forty miles knew that the little house on the hill was the home of one of the kindest souls in all the country-side.

Dr. Wilkins had passed the half-century mark in life. For thirty years, he had administered to the good people of Plattsville and vicinity, and many a child at night did not close an eye before asking God's blessing upon the man who

drove through storm and rain, day and night, along the gloomy country roads to bring relief to the sick and suffering. Dr. Wilkins had the whole country to himself. Other young doctors had come and "hung out their shingle" only to take it down again, after waiting wearily for the patients that would not materialize. But all loved Wilkins for his noble qualities of mind and heart, and they turned to him in all their afflictions.

But he was dying a martyr at the post of duty and no one, not even himself, seemed to realize it. When a call came from over the mountains that some one was sick or dying, no matter what the distance or the time, Wilkins was on his feet. "I will come just as fast as Nell can carry me," he would say and every one knew that he always kept his word. For days and days, he would have to go without his rest. No wonder, then, that his eyes grew weary on the road. Thirty years ago he had come here, fresh from the halls of the university, the imprint of culture and refinement upon his handsome features—but, to-day, he looked like an old man. His step had lost its elasticity, his spirit its buoyancy and his face its peculiar charm, and yet he was only in the fifties. His hair had turned a steel-gray but it softened the hard lines that were telling on his face. The years had really aged him prema-

turely but, in his heart the younger feelings were creeping back.

"I am growing younger," he said one night in the presence of friends. "Within still throb the heavenly feelings of long ago. Back from those happy days, alight with precious memories, they come, the hot, glowing thoughts that burn and consume. Love opens my heart's door to them and they enter and dwell with me through the livelong day and befriend me in the long, white silences on the far-stretching, country roads. Ah! I am contented—glad to be able to work amongst this poor, pitiful humanity."

CHAPTER II.

Wilkins was a bachelor. In the little house on the hill the doctor dwelt in sweet seclusion; the years had schooled him into a lover of solitude and he was happiest when he was alone. A profound student, he loved books and often his light flickered through his study windows long after the starry midnight passed by. He wrote incessantly, for he was a poet and often poured out his soul in sweetest song. The doctor stored his verses away in a trusty volume and loved and guarded them as zealously as a father would his children. If he had ever published them, he would have grown famous in a night and Platts-ville would have been advertised to the confines of the earth. But the doctor willed otherwise. He was anxious to keep these lines from human eyes save his own, and he succeeded. Perhaps, when he was gone, some one would discover the treasured manuscript and then—well, then he wouldn't care. While he lived only God and himself should know.

But does it not seem strange that this man should keep to himself his life's best work? "Selfishness!" I hear one say. Ah no! pity

rather. Do you know that Wilkins once loved and loved strongly. About his life lingers the memory of one of Love's saddest dramas and, perchance, his muse has wandered along these oft-frequented ways and he voices in his poems this great sorrow and writes for us the bitter chapter of his heart's romance.

Upon his book of manuscript was inscribed a name. From appearances one would judge that it had been done in ink years ago. "Madeline," it was called, this unpublished collection of verse, and the poet, himself, only knew what piercing thorns were hidden under so fascinating a name.

CHAPTER III.

When Dr. Wilkins first came amongst the good people of Plattsville, the times were not so bright as they are now. New roads were being opened up, forests were cut down and prairies broken. Everything was waking from a sense of profound lethargy. The people had never known what it was to have a doctor in their midst and were jubilant. A school was soon opened up to instruct the young. In those days teachers were a luxury, and, when the young doctor offered several hours of his time each day to teach the little ones in the old log school-house, the old ranklings ceased and for a time, at least, all were satisfied. "How good of the young chap! May God bless him!" said an old lady of eighty. "Yes, and he is clever, and our children will know a thing or two when he is through with them," said another.

Now, in the village lived one Francois Fournier, a wealthy French lumberman, who had made his dollars easily in the North-woods. Madeline, his only daughter, was away at boarding-school and only spent a few weeks each summer at the parental home. It was on one of

these occasions that Wilkins had first seen her. She was a beautiful girl, only in her teens then, but blessed with a simplicity of manner that made her a general favorite wherever she went. A few years passed and she returned—a matured Bachelor of Arts.

Often of an evening, when the doctor grew weary of his narrow, little room, he would hitch up his horse and drive down to the Fournier home to discuss matters of common interest with Madeline. Biography, history, travel, poetry, science, art—all would be touched upon and Madeline would astonish the doctor by her knowledge and wonderful grasp of human affairs. He admired her intellectuality—it drew him like a magnet. But, in time, there was a something else stealing into his heart and playing strange antics with him. Go where he might, there was the face of Madeline before him, young and beautiful as a saint's, fresh and smiling as the morning. In his office, on the road, in the sick-chamber, in the very presence of death, in joy and sorrow—there she rose before him, dimly, in clouds of mist, like a white angel of mercy—and he always felt the better for having seen her. He tried to forget her but he could not. She was uppermost in his mind through all the hours of his busy day. Thinking of her did not make him shirk his work. He did not grow careless, but

work and life were a pleasure to him, now that they were radiant with the sunshine that stole from the eyes of Madeline—his Madeline. Ah! not yet! If he could only tell her that he thought of her every minute of the day, that he often woke during the night calling "Madeline! Madeline!" until the lonely shadows shook their heads and mocked him and the vagrant breezes, outside, paused and listened and then laughed bitterly; if he could only tell her that he had worshipped her from the first day that he had seen her, that he loved her with all the love of his strong, manly heart and that he would be happy only when he could call her his wife—ah, then, his little world about Plattsville would be as near like heaven as he could ever wish it. Yes, he would tell her all. The next time his eyes met Madeline's she would know everything.

One evening in June, there was a gentle rap at the surgery door and in walked Madeline, her cheeks aglow with excitement and her lips framed into the sweetest of smiles. It was her first visit to the little house on the hill. The light from a lamp overhead fell tenderly upon her face and made it more beautiful. "Verily, she is an angel sent from paradise," thought he.

"I am glad you came, Madeline," he said cheerily. "I have been thinking of you often these days."

The girl turned her head nervously, like a frightened bird, and her cheeks flushed crimson.

"You will no doubt wonder, Doctor, why I came," she at last began and her lips quivered.

"You may, perhaps, think me presumptuous. If so, then forgive me. You are too busy for a man of your years. I see that you are kept working day and night. Your practice is increasing and you must not run yourself to death. I feel that you should be relieved of your work at the school. You have given your services gratuitously for nigh five years and I feel that I would like to relieve you of this work. I spoke to father to-day and he is quite willing that I should teach. I feel that I want to do some good. God expects me to use my talents, and why should I not be permitted to do so right here in Plattsville amongst my own people. My services will be given free. I do not mean to charge for them. You must not work so hard. It worries me. You simply must let me relieve you, and then I will be happy."

Wilkins was surprised, but the girl's earnest sentences pleased him.

"You are a noble girl," he said after a moment's hesitation, "and I thank you. But I don't see how you should be expected to give up your freedom for my sake."

"Freedom? What is it after all to a girl like

me? Nothing but that vain, empty passing of precious moments without accomplishing anything ennobling in God's eyes. I feel guilty for squandering this gold. I want to work and teach little children to lead their thoughts to Him, and I don't want to see you in harness all the time. I don't want you to die soon. No! no! I want you to live—live through long, happy years!"

Dr. Wilkins gazed into the far away and, for a moment, lingered upon the music of her words. Then he began: "Since you are so kind then, Madeline, you may commence your duties at the school to-morrow. Some day I will try to repay you for all this." Then he bit his lips and silence stole in between them like a friend and drew them closer. The moonlight now fell in streams through the latticed window and with it came precious and holy thoughts to both, and that evening, as the two walked along the road in the direction of the Fournier home, they vowed that they would love each other always.

CHAPTER IV.

A few short years passed. "Doc" Wilkins, as the people called him, had grown in public favor. Every one, save Madeline, called him "Doc." She always called him "Doctor" in the presence of the villagers. "You worked for the title," she said, one evening as they walked to the gate, "and you deserve it. Stewart, why do you allow the people to call you 'Doc?' Why, in the city the physicians and surgeons do not like this aspersion at all. You must demand 'Doctor.' Why, were I a physician, and in heaven to-night, and were any one to call me 'Doc,' I'd simply leave the place. That's all!" and she snapped her little fingers as if she really meant what she said.

Stewart leaned upon the gate and laughed so heartily that the wooden boards fairly squeaked with alarm. Then he straightened up in all seriousness. "Why make a change and grow dignified now, Madeline? It would hurt their poor hearts were I to say anything to them and I do not want to hurt them. When they call me 'Doc,' they feel that they are very close to me and I am close to them. It breaks down the

barriers between us. I know what they mean, and why should I care? I know their love and devotion and I accept 'Doc' as the sweetest music that can ever come from their hearts. They are sincere, at least, and sincerity is verily a jewel, Madeline! I have grown so used to this sort of thing that whenever the t-o-r is added I feel uncomfortable. Let them call me what they wish! I am always their friend. 'Doc' is good enough for me if they are satisfied."

"Doctor," of course, would have been more professional, more ethical, but, after all, Wilkins did a wise thing by letting things stand as they were. He had all Plattsville and vicinity at his knees—one word to hurt them, from his lips, would have driven them away forever. It was this sympathy, this humility that tightened the iron chains about the doctor and his people.

In time, it was rumored that Wilkins would soon take unto himself a helpmate. In the Fournier home, there was general rejoicing. Madeline would soon be Mrs. (Dr.) Wilkins and all the old gossips of the village were busy wagging their tongues. It was the general topic for discussion on market days. At the county fair, a few weeks previous, Madeline had been the cynosure of hundreds of eyes. In the post-office, in the grocery store, in the blacksmith shop—everywhere, the men and women talked and argued and gibbered.

It wanted but a day and then the wedding would be a thing of the past. On the morrow, the happy event was to take place. Madeline, exhausted on account of the many preparations, retired early. By ten o'clock the Fournier's were all asleep.

Through a cellar window a pale light still flickered. Bateese Latour, the trusty butler, had only a few little things to do, and then he would creep away to rest. Before leaving the cellar, however, he drained several flasks of rich Burgundy wine. Later, he set the burning coal-oil lamp out into the hall and, singing an old French voyageur's song, reeled and stumbled into his room.

One of the hall windows was wide open, a heavy wind was blowing—and two hours later the Fournier mansion was in flames. Men, women and children fought the fire like Trojans, but without avail. Mr. and Mrs Fournier were safe, but Madeline could not be found.

For fully half an hour, the men had searched in vain. Presently, there was a faint cry, like one calling for help afar off. All ran in the direction of the voice. Stewart Wilkins, white as death, was in the very front. He pressed on in anguish, closer and closer to the burning building. He saw a little, thin hand struggling through the smoke. Like a madman, he dashed into the seething flames and was lost in clouds of

smoke. The heavy timbers swayed and cracked overhead. In a second they would come crashing down and all would be over.

Presently, Wilkins stumbled back through the fire and smoke, holding Madeline in his strong arms as he made for the outer air. The girl was unconscious and badly burned, and Wilkins fought on, wild and distracted with grief. When he reached the open, he could go no farther and sank down and wept like a child. Bateese was almost beside himself. A glance at the suffering girl's expressive face overpowered him, and he threw himself to the ground and sobbed as if his heart would break. "O God! forgive!" he groaned, "I am to blame—" And, mingled with his threnody came the sound of Wilkins' wild, touching heart-cry: "Madeline! my Madeline! Speak, O speak just one word and then—"

But the falling of timber and the roaring of fire alone filled his ears.

CHAPTER V.

A bright June sun smiled upon the green meadows of Plattsville; the birds sang out their songs in the branches of the trees and the warm breezes, stealing upward from the pleasant river, crooned lullabies through the beautiful, languid afternoon. It was one of those delightful days that steal very close to one's heart and send the blood bounding through one's veins—a day of sunshine and music into which could be crowded all the shadows and tears of one's life. Nature had flung open her leafy, prison doors and every living thing, bird and beast, flower and tree, throbbed and exulted in the vital forces of quickening life. The sun looked through the lace-covered windows of heaven and smiled good-naturedly—impressed and pleased with the lordliness of everything out-of-doors.

Madeline had not left her bed in the last two years. But she was patient and trusted in the goodness of One, Whose home was beyond the blue skies and the pale stars.

The sunbeams stole into her room through the quaint, narrow windows and threw grotesque shadows on the walls, and Madeline's eyes wand-

ered over the green fields and meadows through which she had often roamed in her childhood's days, and along the shining river path to far beyond the distant, blue mountains.

Presently the sound of the village school bell in the distance floated over the meadow. Its music awakened old memories. Madeline tossed about nervously and tears came to her eyes. It was the first time she had wept in years. She was a brave girl (a coward never yet shed tears) and God, alone, knew the leaden weight of her heart.

The clatter of hoofs was heard. Nearer and nearer came the sound and a look of anguish crept into the girl's blue eyes. A shadow glided past the window. In an instant the rider was on his feet. It was Dr. Wilkins just returning from a call over the hills.

"And how is my little girl to-day?" he asked, happily, as hurriedly he brushed into the room, with a look of intense joy upon his noble face.

"Fine! Stewart! Isn't this a beautiful day! How I would love to be out with the birds and the flowers! But no! I am satisfied with these four walls and my little bed. My little kingdom, here, is fairly alive with many pretty fancies and dreams through the busy day. I often think until I grow tired, and then sometimes I lie asleep for hours."

Just then the old familiar school-bell sounded its last peal and a feeling of pain stole into Madeline's heart. It revealed itself upon her girlish face, but Stewart did not notice the shadow that came and went so silently. A sigh, yet another, burst from her lips and it went, like an arrow, through Stewart's heart.

"Stewart!" at last came from Madeline's lips—but she could go no farther.

"Yes, my dear; what is it?"

Two thin, pale fingers then toyed nervously through the pages of an old copy of Longfellow on the bed. Madeline was not herself at all—something was gnawing deep down in her heart.

"Stewart! I pity you," she at last began. "You are so good, so noble, so manly and I—O what am I now but a weak, deformed little thing. You are so beautiful, and I, oh, I am hideous, nothing but a cripple. I thought you would forget me long before now. I prayed that you would forget. But you will, you must forget me, Stewart, for my sake and for your sake, won't you? It can never be—this marriage to which we had nailed our loves, and you must let your thoughts wander down pleasanter lanes. Open the door of your little heart's room and banish me from it forever! Take down the pictures of olden memories! They haunt you, they cry at you with uplifted hands. 'It can never be'—

the strange, sad voices are speaking. Even now, I can hear them."

"Ah! Madeline, do not speak the cruel word! Let me only love and wait! My heaven will never be complete without the radiance of you—sweet, guiding star"—and he pressed her little hand in his and softly raised it to his lips. "Madeline," he spoke softly, "you must not speak so. I cannot forget you. Without you, my heart will be but an empty cage."

"Better that your heart were an empty cage, Stewart, than to have it hold a bird whose voice has stopped singing and whose wings are broken. Stewart, were I to add my life to yours, how would you be benefitted? It would be wrong. How could I help you? I cannot even walk—yet for your sake I am willing to suffer this all. Forget me, Stewart! Shatter the idol of your heart, God will give you another! You need the support of a strong woman's arm, you need the care, the devotion of a loving, helpful wife, able and willing to go from one end of the world to the other, through fire and flood for her husband's sake."

Stewart sat at the bedside, silent and troubled, drinking in every burning word, and through his heart ebbed and flowed even a stronger, a mightier love for the poor, little cripple, whose open avowal had much of honesty and philos-

ophy in it. The color had left his cheeks. Just now he was fighting the hardest battle of his life.

"You look troubled, Stewart. You must not worry—" The music of Madeline's girlish voice startled him. "I will be happier to know that another will share your love and home. But I will not forget you. My love for you will continue beyond the grave. But, Stewart, you must—you will try to forget! Throw me away as a child would its plaything! Let me lie there alone on life's road and, when I shall hear that you have forgotten me, I will be satisfied to pass this life in sweet companionship with the sun and moon and stars and the Father, Who shelters in His care the sickly fledglings of humanity."

Silence, deep and solemn, filled the little room. Troubled hearts always love solitude, and now the soft-eyed messenger was doubly welcome to both. Madeline stirred slightly in her bed, the volume of Longfellow slid to the floor and the silence was broken.

Stewart raised his eyes to hers. The gleams of the setting sun threw a halo about her golden hair. "Thou, poor, little, white angel," he thought to himself, as his eyes rested upon the picture that Love had painted on his heart. Then, in words that she alone heard, he whispered: "Madeline, it is hard, but I will try to forget"—and the two wept together.

It was a great sacrifice for both. And he went out into the great, gray presence of the world trying to forget the little angel whose fingers had lain so heavily on his heart; while she, poor frail, loving thing, moved from her bed to her invalid chair and from her chair to her bed, through long, patient years, with the golden cross of suffering ever clinging to her, like some precious, sacred thing.

CHAPTER VI.

Let us draw a curtain over all the long years that followed. Dr. Wilkins had tried to forget the little drama of those early years, but it clung to him always, and Madeline, poor Madeline, was ever uppermost in his mind. To-day she was still alive, standing between him and the future he dared not think of. Her father was dead, but her aged mother lived with her in the little cottage down by the pine grove. Bateese Latour also made his home with them, and did all in his power to make their lives comfortable.

Dr. Wilkins often dropped in to see Madeline. She was well up in years now, and spoke slowly and somewhat nervously. Her hair was turning gray, and she was thin and pale. The same quaint windows looked out upon the fields and the mountains. The same little bed stood in the corner, and the same little cripple (much changed however) was prisoner within the same four, bare walls.

When the two met, however, they never spoke of those early days, and of the sorrow and suffering that clung to them. The past was sacred ground. But something seemed always to draw

their hearts together. And though, unconsciously, Wilkins was still the lover he controlled his feelings so carefully that Madeline never knew but that the past was a shadow that had shifted out of his sky forever. Outwardly he seemed the picture of perfect happiness; inwardly, his soul was tossed about by this wild, deep ocean of unrest. In her presence he acted his part well, this noble, fighting soldier of humanity; but in the eyes of God he stood in his true light, and doubtless there was much of pity felt for him in heaven.

CHAPTER VII.

All morning people had come to the doctor's surgery. The anxious feet had worn a deep path through the snow from the road to his door. For a moment the men and women paused, then knocked again and called up the speaking-tube, that led into the doctor's sleeping room upstairs. But no answer came and, disappointed, they drove away. "Doc. Wilkins must have gone out on a case in the night and hadn't probably returned," was what the blacksmith said, and this is what he told every one passing the smithy that day. With the afternoon the same persons waited and knocked and called at the doctor's door. But no voice came from within to give a sign of hope, and with heavy hearts they returned to their sick-beds, where suffering ones waited and longed for the sound of Nell's hoofs on the icy roads and the familiar music of her jingling sleigh-bells.

Night came with her cold winds and lonely shadows. No light shone from the doctor's study, but in the room upstairs there was the sound of heavy, rapid breathing.

Upon his bed lay Dr. Wilkins, just as he had

come in from his calls the night before, when he had fallen asleep in his sleigh and Nell had brought him home safely. The heavy blanket with which he had been covered had fallen to the floor. He seemed fast asleep, but it was a strange sleep, interspersed with twitches and nervous startings. His face was red and feverish; slowly, he turned, and a fit of coughing came on which woke him. His eyes opened—but they had a strange, faraway look in them. He seemed dazed, and he looked strangely about the room as if he were lost. Just then, the door-bell downstairs sounded loudly. It was like a cry of agony in the startled night—ringing high above the noises of the angry winds that swept through the naked trees.

He raised himself on his bed and, holding his forehead, listened eagerly. Again the bell rang, and the voice of a child sounded through the room:

"Mother is sick. Come quick, Doctor!"

It was little Mary Malone, the blacksmith's daughter, and her voice was choked with tears. Presently Wilkins came to his senses. He jumped to the floor and made for the speaking-tube not many steps away. A violent pain pierced his side. Everything about him swam before his eyes, and he staggered and fell to the floor just as his fingers were about to clutch the speak-

ing-tube on the wall. Almost instantly his mind became a blank, and he muttered strange words and strange sentences that no one could ever have understood. And for some time he lay there turning and throwing himself from side to side. The poor man, from exposure to cold and from overwork, had developed pneumonia. Just now he was tossing in the frenzy of delirium. He tried to raise himself to his feet, but the pain in his side would master him and pull him down like a child. Slowly and gradually he quieted down and fell into a peaceful sleep which lasted some hours.

Again, the door-bell sounded downstairs. Bateese Latour was at the speaking-tube this time.

"Madeline Fournier is dying," he cried. "She wants you. Doctor! for God's sake, come at once!"

The sound of the bell had startled the sick man. "Madeline Fournier—dying—" shrieked Wilkins. "Am I dreaming—O God—" and, on hands and knees, he crept over to the tube and sent down the message: "I will come at once. Get Nell out of her stable, Bateese, and hitch her up!" Just then he had an awful coughing spell which almost prostrated him. He felt wretched, but his mind was a little clearer. The thought of what he was about to do nerved him for the

deed. With some difficulty, he rose to his feet. New strength came to him. He walked over to the table, struck a match, and lit the tallow candle standing near. Then his eyes wandered to the unfinished manuscripts labelled "Madeline," which lay before him. All the years of his life were imprisoned in that grand, beautiful, classical poem. Slowly and nervously, his fingers ran over the written copy until a sigh escaped his lips. Then he donned his heavy, sealskin coat.

"I am afraid the last chapter of 'Madeline' will close this night," he muttered sadly. He seemed to know—and his eyes had tears in them. Down the old, creaking stairs he went, little realizing what a sick man he was, his whole mind upon Madeline—his Madeline.

"Ride on ahead of me, Bateese, with your horse!" he said breathlessly, as he climbed into the sleigh. A little groan of suffering escaped him, and Nell turned her head and looked nervously. Then she tossed her head into the air. "Go on, Nell! I leave it to you to-night," was all he said, and her hoofs sank into the icy road and she was off like a shot.

Dr. Wilkins reached the Fournier home in good time. Every window threw out a welcome blaze of light, and, when the sound of Nell's hoofs beat upon the icy road, the door flew open wide and Mrs. Fournier, poor, old woman, stood

eagerly awaiting him in the door-way, light in hand.

In a moment he was at Madeline's bedside. Life, at its best, hung merely by a thread but she recognized him and smiled sweetly. "I am so glad you came, Stewart," she said slowly, and then closed her tired eyes.

Stewart's face turned an ashen gray and his body shook visibly. Almost unconsciously, through dire weakness, he sank into the chair at his side. His hand sought Madeline's. The strange look again came to his eyes and, for a moment, the old love crept between them and made them happy. It was the sweetest moment both had ever tasted.

"I grow faint—Good-bye mother!—Bateese!" came in faint, trembling voice. "Stewart—good-bye!"

The sick man bent over the little form. "Have courage, Madeline," he whispered, "I will meet you at the parting of the ways."

Her eyes opened widely and she nodded her head sweetly, and then her eyes closed. In another moment, Dr. Wilkins staggered out into the night and made for his horse. "The page of the last chapter of 'Madeline' is open before me," he said thoughtfully, as he drove on. "'The white Footpath of Peace'—what a beautiful, soul-satisfying title. O God, I thank Thee!"

Early next morning Nell waited long at the stable-door and kicked her hoofs impatiently into the snow. She tossed her head from side to side and cried pitifully, but there was no stir in the sleigh behind this time. Her master did not hear her pleading voice. His eyes were closed in peaceful sleep, and on his face the smile lingered that came when all suffering was over.

He had gone to meet his Madeline at the parting of the ways.